HONOR THE DEAD, STOP THE SHUTTLE The Editors

THE NEW REPUBLIC

DO ECONOMISTS UNDERSTAND CULTURE? Clifford Geertz

DO DOCTORS UNDERSTAND HISTORY? Sherwin B. Nuland

EBRUARY 17, 2003

HOW THE DEMOCRATS CREATED AL SHARPTON
Michelle Cottle

WHY THEY SHOULD DISOWN HIM
Peter Beinart

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Where We Stand

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Our healthcare system leaves millions unserved and it's a national shame.

Our country is facing a massive healthcare crisis. Millions of Americans don't have access to medical treatment. While we're second to none in medical expertise and technology, we're way behind in making healthcare and health insurance affordable for working families.

One out of six Americans—44 million—has no health insurance. With the cost of medical care skyrocketing, that's a prescription for disaster. A simple outpatient procedure can run thousands of dollars; treating more serious problems can leave uninsured families penniless. And the cost to society—in human, as well as economic, terms—is enormous.

Most adults without health insurance—85% of them—work hard in low-paying, non-union jobs and can't afford to buy insurance on their own. But as premium costs continue to soar, even better paid employees, including many professionals, are losing healthcare benefits.

And the bad news just keeps getting worse. As most states make deep cuts in spending to cope with revenue shortfalls and huge budget deficits, millions of our poorest citizens are losing Medicaid benefits, their lifeline to decent healthcare.

The healthcare crisis is an incredibly complex problem, and there are no easy answers. But we can solve it, and one place to start would be to insist that our government invest in making decent healthcare affordable for working families, rather than provide more tax breaks for the rich.

If we continue to put off dealing with this critical issue, we will soon become a nation in which good healthcare is a privilege only the wealthy can afford—everyone else will just have to hope that they don't become seriously ill or injured. For a nation as affluent as ours, that's appalling.

FACTS:

- *Between 1997 and 2002, the average cost for basic health insurance plans went up a staggering 56%.*
- *Uninsured adults are four times more likely to put off or forego getting the medical care they need—resulting in greatly increased hospitalizations for problems that could have been avoided or managed in a doctor's office.*
- *Of the 44 million uninsured Americans, one quarter are children.*

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Sandra Feldman

Sandra Feldman, President, American Federation of Teachers & AFT Healthcare

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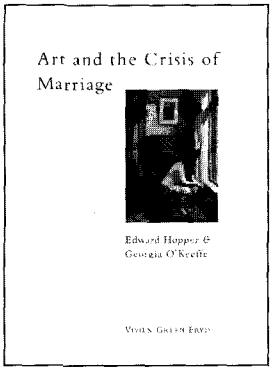
WORK & GENDER Relationships

NEW FROM CHICAGO



ART AND THE CRISIS OF MARRIAGE
Edward Hopper and Georgia O'Keeffe
Vivien Green Fryd

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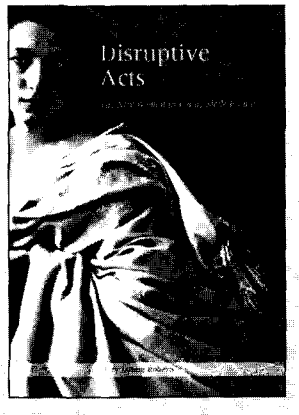

DISRUPTIVE ACTS
The New Woman in Fin-de-Siècle France
Mary Louise Roberts

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CORRESPONDENCE

Fat chance

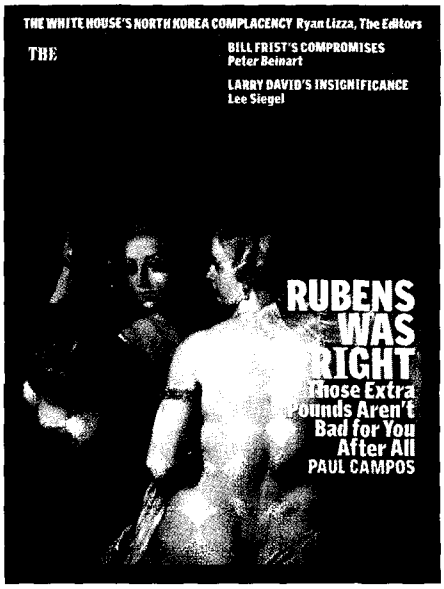
TO THE EDITORS:
How unfortunate for Paul Campos that just as his article appeared studies in two major medical journals completely refute him ("Weighting Game," January 13). Both added to the mountain of scientific literature that a high body mass index (BMI) is *with exceptions* an excellent measurement of obesity and premature death. A *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) report found that white men ages 20 to 30 with a BMI greater than 45 lost 13 years of life compared with those with a BMI below 25 (the cutoff for the definition of "overweight"), while overweight women lost eight years. The *Annals of Internal Medicine* reported six to seven years of lost life for obese 40-year-old nonsmokers, approximately the same premature mortality found in normal-weight smokers.

Campos says a "careful survey of medical literature" supports him. Translation: He cherry-picked a few items and twisted them. For over a century, insurance actuaries have noted a clear correlation between fatness and early death. More recently, medical professionals have defined and explained that association. These include the 1995 Nurses' Health Study of over 115,000 women and a 1998 study by Dr. June Stevens and her colleagues that tracked more than 300,000 men and women for twelve years. "It's the very lean weight that is associated with the best survival rate," said Stevens.

A 1999 *New England Journal of Medicine* report on over one million people found those with a BMI below 25 lived longest, while white men with the highest BMIs were twice as likely to die during the study and overweight white women fared even worse.

Campos pretends the Harvard Alumni Study supports him, yet it states that "body weight and mortality were directly related," and the "lowest mortality was observed among men weighing, on average, 20% below the U.S. average for men of comparable age and height."

Never mind though, says Campos, because "even where there are clear correlations," association is not cause and effect. That's sophistry and empirically false. Studies have repeatedly shown that obesity leads to congestive heart failure, coronary heart disease, stroke, cancer, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, Type 2 diabetes, and myriad other harmful conditions.



Campos's "fat but fit" thesis was directly tested and refuted in a 1995 JAMA study, finding that, in every measured risk factor for heart disease but one, the benefits of weight loss outweighed those of exercise.

Like the very diet industry he deplores, Campos offers something for nothing. And like sirens of legend, his message kills.

MICHAEL FUMENTO
Senior Fellow
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TO THE EDITORS:
Paul Campos writes about issues regarding the relationship between body weight and health that were raised 15 years ago by Reuben Andres, but he ignores the wealth of literature published since that time documenting powerful relationships between being overweight and the risks of coronary heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, various cancers, arthritis, gall stones, and many other causes of morbidity and total mortality. These analyses have included careful control for dietary factors and physical activity, demonstrating that being overweight is not just a marker for other behaviors. Obviously being physically active and obese (although uncommon) is better than being obese and inactive, but many studies have found that not being overweight provides additional advantage. Indeed, even modest weight loss can improve glucose tolerance (the propensity for diabetes) and reduce blood pressure. The study of fitness quoted by Campos has many limitations, including that poor fitness can partly reflect an underlying disease that is a cause of sub-

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sequent mortality. These issues have been discussed in detail in an earlier review of this topic, and there is a strong international consensus among scientists that overweight (BMI over 25) and obesity are major contributors to morbidity and mortality. Contrary to Campos's implications, this is not the result of a sellout of researchers to the diet and pharmaceutical companies.

Of course, a major part of the solution to the worldwide epidemic of obesity would be to promote greater physical activity, but one important reason is to control weight. It is difficult to maintain weight loss without increased physical activity. However, we also need to avoid overconsumption of calories, even from foods that that would not be considered junk. To say we should do nothing about obesity may make good journalistic copy, but it is bad science. Overweight is a serious medical and public health problem that requires urgent attention; to pretend it is not will result in enormous and unnecessary suffering.

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PAUL CAMPOS REPLIES:
Michael Fumento accuses me of selectively citing studies that support my assertions; he himself employs the curious rhetorical tactic of selectively citing studies with data that contradict his assertions. For example, the cohort that enjoyed the lowest mortality risk in the Nurses' Health Study consisted exclusively of "overweight" individuals (BMI 25 to 26.9). And, in the recent JAMA study he cites, the *entire* "overweight" range was found to be optimal for African Americans, while among black women no significantly increased mortality was observed at weight levels far above the threshold for obesity (BMI 30 and above), let alone for "overweight."

In Willett and Stampfer's letter, the situation becomes curiouser and curiouser. The authors claim that "there is a strong international consensus ... that overweight (BMI over 25) and obesity are major contributors to morbidity and mortality." Consider that statement in the light of studies, such as one published recently in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*, which involved 39,756 subjects and a ten-year follow-up. This study, like so many others, found no statistically significant increased mortality risk among "overweight" subjects with BMI figures of 25 to 26.9. Among those subjects who had not lost more than ten pounds in the preceding five years (a category designed to exclude those who had experienced illness-related weight loss), it found no statistically significant increased risk of mortality across the entire "overweight" range (BMI 25 to 29.9). Among subjects who were 65 and older, BMI was found not to be related to mortality at all—even among the "obese" (BMI 30 and above). As I pointed out in my article, such outcomes are commonplace in large-scale epidemiological studies. I would be tempted to bring this recent study to Willett's and Stampfer's attentions if not for the fact that they are its authors.

Violent path

TO THE EDITORS:
While Joshua Kurlantzick persuasively argues for a reconsideration of U.S. policy toward the region, he oversimplifies the situation in Malaysia ("Off Guard," January 20). While the majority of Parti Islam SeMalaysia's followers are probably peaceful Muslims, the Mahathir regime's hostility toward Islamist PAS is hardly a new phenomenon and reflects an understanding often lost on the enlightened West. Radical and intolerant Islam—the kind increasingly associated with PAS in Malaysia—leads inevitably to violence. Even if the PAS rank and file remain relatively moderate, the party's fundamentalist officials are steadily providing the ideological raw material for potential jihadists. It is easy to paint Mahathir as one of those pesky "corrupt regimes" excessively entangled with the Bush administration. In reality, the problem is far more complex.

MIKE CASSIN
Charlottesville, Virginia ■

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Florida Oranges From Maine?

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Albatross

AL SHARPTON IS a world-class bullshitter. In a devastating 1996 review in these pages, Jim Sleeper noted that Sharpton's first autobiography, *Go and Tell Pharaoh*, included lies about his age (36 at the time, not 38), his residence (Englewood, New Jersey, not Brooklyn, New York), and even his motivation for writing the book (Sharpton attributed it to his 1991 stabbing; Sleeper showed that Sharpton hatched the idea months before that). When *Newsday* alleged in 1988 that Sharpton had been an FBI informant, the reverend insisted that he had tapped his own phone in an independent effort to gather information on local drug dealers. When THE NEW REPUBLIC this week asked Sharpton's campaign how he could respect the NAACP's boycott of South Carolina while simultaneously renting hotel rooms in the state, his campaign explained that Sharpton wasn't actually paying for the rooms. In 1992, Sharpton told Sleeper, "In many ways society is totally a hustle from top to bottom." And that creed still governs the reverend's work today.

Bullshitting is the mechanism Sharpton uses to escape unscathed from the moral train wrecks that dot his career. On "Meet the Press" in January, Tim Russert reminded the freshly reinvented presidential candidate of four episodes in his past: His 1987 conviction for defaming a man he accused of raping Tawana Brawley; his 1993 conviction for tax evasion; his 1995 incitement against a Jewish store owner in Harlem, which culminated in the racially motivated murder of seven of the store's employees; and his 2002 eviction from the Empire State Building for failing to pay his rent. Sharpton responded by implying racism and changing the subject: "I think you've got white candidates with worse backgrounds who—." Russert interrupted to ask whom he meant. Sensing a dead end, Sharpton declared, "I'm not getting into name-calling," and changed the subject once again. "If you want to talk about background, talk about how a white male stabbed me at a nonviolent march. I forgave him, testified for him. That's somebody that brings America together," he declared. Russert doggedly returned to his question, asking Sharpton, "Why not apologize for Tawana Brawley?" "To apologize for believing and standing with a woman—I think all of us need to take women's claims more seriously," Sharpton responded indignantly. "No apology for Tawana Brawley?" Russert tried one last time. "No apology for standing up for civil rights," replied Sharpton.

That last answer is particularly revealing. According to Al Sharpton, the behavior of Al Sharpton is synonymous with the cause of civil rights, and therefore any criticism of Al Sharpton is, by definition, an attack on racial justice. By running for president, Sharpton is effectively asking the Democratic Party to bless that proposition. He knows that, by treating him as a legitimate candidate, the party is ratifying his self-coronation as the leader of black America. And, if the Democratic Party and the media accept him as the leader of black America, the post-Martin Luther King Jr., post-Jesse Jackson civil rights movement will become, in effect, whatever Sharpton says it is.

So far, the five legitimate Democratic candidates are helping Sharpton achieve his goal. Howard Dean, John Kerry, and Joseph Lieberman, for instance, have begun publicly joking about which of them the reverend might pick as his running mate. All involved see this affectionate banter as win-win. Sharpton wants legitimacy; the other candidates grant him legitimacy so he can't accuse them of racism. Were any one Democratic contender to slight Sharpton, he would instantly become the target of the reverend's ire, and the political mud-wrestling match that would ensue would lower his stature while his opponents looked on opportunistically.

The problem is that this strategy of appeasement—while wise for any given presidential candidate—is devastating for the party as a whole. First of all, it means that, by the end of the primaries, the most important black leader in the Democratic Party will be a man with a history of screwing the Democratic Party. Jesse Jackson may have caused Walter Mondale and Michael Dukakis headaches, but he didn't purposefully sabotage their campaigns. Sharpton, by contrast, endorsed Republican Al D'Amato in 1986 and all but endorsed George Pataki in 1994. Anyone who rules out the possibility that in August 2004 an aggrandized Sharpton will, after a private conversation with Karl Rove, issue a pained statement declaring that the Democratic nominee has betrayed the party's base and doesn't deserve the reverend's endorsement should have a conversation with Robert Abrams, Mario Cuomo, or Mark Green.

Second of all, the most important black leader in the Democratic Party will be a man who knows nothing, and has done nothing, beyond race. The intra-Democratic Party fights of the 1980s were, of course, racialized. But Jackson also became the standard bearer for the Democratic Party's left. And, as a result, by 1992—when Jerry Brown took up Jackson's mantle and black Virginia Governor Douglas Wilder ran as a centrist—the party's ideological conflicts were about something broader than race.

Sharpton, by contrast, has no real profile on any issue except police brutality. He hasn't shown the slightest hint of serious knowledge about, or serious interest in, health care, housing, or education. When Russert asked how he would balance the budget, Sharpton mentioned "administrative over-cost in various government services." When asked how he would cut the defense budget, Sharpton said, "I've seen various reports where a lot of defense spending is buying three-hundred-dollar pieces of furniture."

But, most importantly, the most powerful black Democrat will be a man who eagerly trades on the moral resonance of the civil rights movement to justify the vilest, most self-aggrandizing behavior. Sharpton called Brawley's supposed rape "the latest in a series of outrages stretching back to Jamestown." In his most recent book, *Al on America*, he writes, "Pundits ask me why not run for Congress or a local office. ... What they're really saying is, 'Why don't you stay in your place?' Why didn't Jackie Robinson stay in the Negro League?" If Sharpton comes to be seen as the primary inheritor of the civil rights tradition, that tradition could within a short period be divested of any public moral authority, which would be a historic tragedy.

On national security, and now increasingly on race, the Democratic Party has returned to the 1980s. And the lesson of that decade is that the party will not return from the wilderness until it confronts the *internal* forces that have put it there. If the Democrats confront Sharpton, they could well lose the White House in 2004. But, if they allow him to become the party's primary spokesman on race, they could forfeit it for a generation. What the Democrats need today is a caucus devoted to calling Al Sharpton the bullshitter he is. And the sooner that fight begins, the sooner it will end. As the reverend might say, "No justice, no peace."

PETER BEINART

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And, if it's not from Champagne, it's simply not true Champagne.

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FEBRUARY 17, 2003

Sacrifice Fly

THE WAY TO honor the *Columbia* dead, we are now being told, is to ensure that the space shuttle program goes on. No. The way to honor the *Columbia* dead is to *stop* the space shuttle program—a program that kills valiant astronauts, accomplishes almost nothing in space, and wastes huge amounts of money for political rather than scientific reasons. If kept flying, the space shuttle is certain to fail again. Honor the *Columbia* seven by replacing the shuttle with a new system for reaching space—new, unmanned rockets that fly without risk to life, coupled with a new, smaller spacecraft or "spaceplane" designed just for people and incorporating the new technology developed in the quarter-century since the first space shuttle was built.

Yes, space exploration is inherently risky: No one expects the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to build a spacecraft that never malfunctions. But the shuttle, the manned spacecraft that first launched in 1981 and flies only to "low-Earth" orbit, has proved far more deadly than, say, the moon missions, which were conducted before pocket calculators existed. In the 42-year history of men and women journeying into the infinite dark, shuttle-flight failures have killed 14 astronauts and destroyed $5 billion worth of hardware. *All other manned spacecraft failures combined* have taken the lives of four cosmonauts and destroyed a few million dollars' worth of hardware in two Soviet accidents. NASA seems unwilling to address the fact that the shuttle is killing its own people—nothing fundamental in its program has changed in the 17 years since the *Challenger* came apart in the air—so how can the agency be trusted on complex policy judgments about space priorities? Nor has Congress, which views space policy primarily with an eye toward pork, mandated change in the face of tragedy.

WHY IS THE shuttle prone to catastrophe? Though technologically impressive and expertly crewed, it is too big and too complex a piece of equipment, with too unrealistic a mission. Decades of reuse, for one, is an unrealistic goal. The *Columbia* broke up on its twenty-eighth flight—its twenty-eighth cycle of three times the force of gravity at liftoff, followed by absolute zero in orbit, followed by 3,000 degrees of heat at reentry, followed by a jarring "dead-stick" (no power) landing at twice the speed of a commercial airliner landing. Meticulous maintenance—NASA and its contractors do an extraordinary job of caring for the shuttles, or they'd all be rattling apart—kept the *Columbia* in one piece through 27 flights. It was unreasonable to think this could go on, and it is now unrealistic to think the three remaining shuttles, all of which have completed approximately the same number of flight cycles as the *Columbia*, will not eventually meet similar fates.

The space shuttle's size and complexity also reflect unrealistic goals. It was designed to be able to lift a 25-ton payload of space probes or satellites, requiring maximum size, power, and high stress. In actual use, the typical payload weighs far less. Had NASA continued launching its heavy payloads on standard "throwaway" rockets—ones that carry no crew and are not expected to make repeat journeys—as it did reliably in the 1960s at lower real-dollar costs than the shuttle requires, then the shuttle could have been designed as a smaller, lower-stress vehicle for people alone. Insisting that the space shuttle be huge and max-tech meant, for example, main engines with thousands of moving parts and famously temperamental turbocompressors that spin at 30,000 rpm; other simpler and more reliable rocket engines produce almost as much thrust with far fewer parts and far less repair time. NASA wanted something mammoth, max-tech, visually impressive, and astonishingly costly. What it got was a mammoth, max-tech, visually impressive, and astonishingly costly flying machine that has twice ended up in glowing metal shards. The old Soviet space program also built a shuttle, called the *Buran*, of similar size and specifications to the *Columbia*. The *Buran* flew into orbit once, and then the Soviet shuttle program was cancelled for being ridiculously expensive—and equally important, of little value, considering there is essentially nothing that shuttles accomplish at higher prices that rockets and other spacecraft cannot at lower ones.

In terms of lifting payloads, the shuttle also does nothing unmanned rockets could not do more cheaply and without risk to human life. Industry turns out to have little interest in shuttle-born experiments or manufacturing; hardly any shuttle payloads have been commercial because it has turned out that industry has no interest in orbital manufacturing. All the shuttle is really useful for is "life science"—studying the human body's response to space—and for keeping the astronaut corps skilled at going into orbit, on

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the assumption that astronauts may someday prove essential to society. There isn't any pure science done aboard the space shuttle that could not be done at a fraction of the cost on unmanned launches, as (among others) Robert Park, director of public information at the American Physical Society, a physicists' organization, has noted. It was heart-wrenching to see *The New York Times*, on February 4, devote an article to the suggestion that the science packages aboard the *Columbia* were worth an astronaut's life. No one had to be there to push the buttons on the Mediterranean Israeli Dust Experiment or to spin the wheel on a little gizmo that made a microgravity flame-ball.

NASA defenders say the core problem is agency underfunding. "I don't think you can continue to make draconian cuts in this budget and accomplish our mission safely," Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison pronounced the day of the *Columbia* loss. But Hutchison and others who decry "draconian" cuts in the budget don't say that NASA funding has barely changed in the last decade. Five years ago, the NASA budget was $14 billion, which inflates to $15.5 billion in current dollars; last year, the NASA budget was $15 billion. That's a 3 percent real-dollar cut over five years, during a period when the price of electronics, which NASA uses heavily, has declined fast. It's true that NASA budgets have fallen in real-dollar terms since about 15 years ago. But that was the moment when the Air Force, once a shuttle user, formally divorced from operations with the civilian space agency; the Air Force has since been granted a budget that makes it the world's second-most expensive space program, surpassing Russia's spending. Those who claim "draconian" U.S. space cuts never mention that, when numbers for NASA and the Air Force are combined, appropriations have steadily increased.

Most important, while the NASA budget has declined somewhat in real terms in recent years, shuttle launches have also declined during the same period. The essential number—spending *per shuttle mission*—has gone up, not down. In 1997, for example, the NASA budget of $15.5 billion in today's dollars funded eight shuttle flights. In 2002, the NASA budget of $15 billion funded five shuttle flights. That's a 3 percent funding drop but a 38 percent reduction in flights. NASA figures from the past decade show the same trend: steadily increased spending per shuttle flight as the number of launches declines by a greater amount than overall budget contraction. Discounting for one year when the fleet was grounded, since 1997 the average price of a shuttle mission in current dollars has been $448 million. Last year, NASA spent $640 million per shuttle launch. The notion that the shuttle program is starved for funds is a total fiction intended to justify budget featherbedding.

And why not? Featherbedding has become the essence of the shuttle program. Senator Hutchison wants more shuttle spending—and what a coincidence, she hails from Texas, where the shuttle's flight-control center is located. You'll likely be hearing similar calls from politicians from Florida, California, Maryland, Alabama, and Ohio—the primary states for NASA operations—as well as from Illinois, Washington, Colorado, and Georgia—states where Boeing and Lockheed Martin, the shuttle's prime contractors, have important presences.

The space shuttle's price and unreliability are especially dismaying since the whole reason the program came into existence was to cut costs and increase reliability. As the *Apollo* moon missions wound down at the beginning of the 1970s, Congress approved shuttle construction on the promise that a winged, mostly reusable spacecraft would be much cheaper than throwaway rockets. Congress was originally told the shuttle would cost about $20 million per launch in today's dollars. Had Congress been told the real price per launch would be $640 million, the current number—about the same as the cost of an entire *Apollo* mission to the moon—the shuttle proposal would have been laughed off Capitol Hill. Congress was also originally told the fleet would be so reliable that a shuttle would fly into orbit once a week. Had Congress been told the shuttle would operate only five times per year, again the original proposal would have been laughed off Capitol Hill.

THE DEEP IRONY in all this overspending is that, in many respects, the shuttle program is actually standing in the way of ambitious space exploration. NASA isn't even considering a return to the moon or sending men and women to Mars because the shuttle is so expensive and fallible that big plans are currently out of the question; everything NASA might spend on grand plans is instead going down the shuttle drain. Commentators complain that NASA has not had grand ambitions in two decades. It is no coincidence that this is also the period of the space shuttle, which stands in the way of the next great space achievement.

Which brings us back to how to memorialize the daring and valor of the seven men and women who perished amid the shards of the *Columbia*. End the space shuttle program now, and use the next decade of shuttle funding to design new space-launch systems that would be less expensive and more reliable, taking advantage of the last three decades of technology. Many analysts believe that a new generation of low-cost throwaway rockets for launching heavy loads, plus a small spaceplane for those occasions when people really are needed in orbit, would cut costs and improve safety so much that grand ambitions in space would become possible again. Such suggestions are not pipe dreams: Improving technology should make throwaway rockets cheaper, and the United States had a functioning spaceplane called the X-15 *half a century ago*, but research into spaceplane ideas was effectively sidetracked by NASA when the shuttle was authorized because spaceplanes, being affordable, would undercut shuttle constituent funding.

Making grand space ambitions, such as a return to the moon or flight to Mars possible again—and allowing the next generation of astronauts to pursue them aboard spacecraft that don't fall apart—would be a lasting monument to the *Columbia* crew. And, if designing the successor to the shuttle means no space flights for a decade, space will still be there when the United States is finally ready to return in force. ■

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NOTEBOOK

THE NEW REVISIONISM: It is by now a well-established fact that Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons against Kurds in the northern Iraq town of Halabja on March 16, 1988, killing more than 5,000. Dozens of journalists, government delegations, and international human rights groups who have investigated the matter have further concluded that Halabja was the first frightful act of Saddam's *Anfal* campaign, a genocide that consumed almost 100,000 Kurds in all. Indeed, pretty much the only places that these facts have been contested of late have been within Saddam's government—and on the op-ed page of *The New York Times*. Last week, the Gray Lady published a revisionist argument by Stephen C. Pelletiere arguing, incredibly, that Saddam had little or nothing to do with the Halabja massacre after all. A retired Army War College professor who served as a senior Iraq analyst for the CIA during the Iran-Iraq war and co-authored the 1990 book *Iraqi Power and U.S. Security in the Middle East*, Pelletiere begins by noting, correctly, that Halabja was the site of an intense battle during the Iran-Iraq war. He concedes that Iraq did use chemical weapons at Halabja but argues that the Iranians did as well (a claim, incidentally, that a leading Halabja investigator for Human Rights Watch says is baseless). Pelletiere then cites a Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) report issued shortly after Halabja to argue, "[I]t was Iranian gas that killed the Kurds, not Iraqi gas." Why? The Kurdish corpses "indicated that they had been killed with a blood agent," which the Iraqis, "who are thought to have used mustard gas in the battle, are not known to have possessed." But this was not the DIA's final word on the subject: A later DIA report, issued in 1991, concluded definitively that "Iraq is known to have employed ... a blood agent, hydrogen cyanide gas (HCN) ... against Iranian soldiers, civilians, and Iraqi Kurdish civilians." (As it happens, this is likely beside the point: Pelletiere's assertions notwithstanding, most accounts of the Halabja massacre have concluded that the deaths were caused by mustard gas, the nerve agents sarin and tabun, and perhaps VX and the biological agent aflatoxin.) More important, Pelletiere's account ignores the scores of Halabja survivors who "could see clearly that these were Iraqi, not Iranian aircraft, since they flew low enough for their markings to be legible," as Human Rights Watch concluded in its 1993 report *Genocide in Iraq*. In unguarded moments, members of Saddam's regime have even confirmed his genocidal intentions toward the Kurds. Saddam's cousin Ali Hassan Al Majid, entrusted to carry out the Kurdish slaughter, was caught on tape at a Baathist meeting in May 1988 boasting about the Kurds, "I will kill them all with chemical weapons! Who is going to say anything? The international community? Fuck them!" (Human Rights Watch believes the tape is mislabeled, recording a conversation that really took place in 1987—i.e., before Halabja.) When they know they are on camera, of course, Saddam's representatives offer a different view. On "Fox News Sunday," Mohammed Aldouri, Iraqi Ambassador to the United Nations, offered his thanks to Pelletiere and the *Times*. "Your president, President Bush, mentioned that several times that Iraq, the president of Iraq, poisoned its own people," he said. "Pelletiere in the article in *New York Times* last Friday, and I'm thankful for *The New York Times* for that, saying that it is not true; Iraq is not poisoning its own people." We're all for the *Times* publishing counterintuitive pieces on its op-ed page. But perhaps where genocide is concerned it should leave the revisionism to others.

THE LOST DECADE: Last week, this space took note of the Bush administration's decision to replace its ten-year budget forecasts with five-year ones. The obvious explanation at the time was that the ten-year forecasts helped remind the country that our newfound deficits are likely to last far into the future, a reminder that is not in the White House's political interests. But since then an even clearer explanation has emerged. The administration has come up with plans—curiously unmentioned in President Bush's State of the Union address—to introduce new "Lifetime Savings Accounts" that would dramatically expand investors' opportunities to shelter their investment income tax-free. (In case you're wondering: Yes, this would overwhelmingly benefit the rich.) Under Bush's plan, a married couple with two children and sufficient resources could put up to $30,000 per year into the new accounts; interest, capital gains, and dividends from these accounts would all be tax-free. Most important, any or all of the money could be withdrawn from these accounts at any time and for any purpose. (On top of this investor windfall, Bush is also proposing new tax-free Retirement Savings Accounts, which would function the same way, but the proceeds of which could not be withdrawn until age 58.) The beauty of the plan is that it would likely cost little or nothing over the first five years. (It might even increase revenues slightly, as investors pull their money out of taxable accounts in order to put them in the new shelters.) But the budget would start hemorrhaging revenue soon after that. Currently, the government receives approximately $160 billion in revenue per year from taxes on interest, capital gains, and dividends. If, as seems likely, a majority of this income were sheltered in Bush's new accounts, his plan would cost the Treasury hundreds of billions of dollars in lost revenue over the next ten years. Of course, thanks to the administration's new, shorter-term budget forecasts, all that lost revenue won't show up until it is too late to do anything about it.

CAUSE AND EFFECT REVISITED: Few myths about George W. Bush's presidency are more difficult to sustain than the "uniter not a divider" one—the idea that he would love to govern from the bipartisan center but is prevented from doing so by the cheap partisanship of congressional Democrats. In fact, Bush has arguably been the most partisan president in memory. Many news outlets noted the unprecedented aggressiveness with which Bush used the Iraqi threat to stump for a Republican Congress last fall; few pointed out that his

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efforts came after skeptical Senate Democrats had nonetheless voted overwhelmingly to give the president a free hand on Iraq policy. So conservatives claiming that Bush has indeed sought bipartisan comity generally resort to one of two arguments: either that the acquiescence of just one or two Democrats (yes, we mean you, Zell Miller and John Breaux) constitutes "bipartisanship," or that Bush's extraordinary partisan exertions are merely responses to Democratic politicking. An exceptional example of the latter form can be found in former White House speechwriter David Frum's *The Right Man: The Surprise Presidency of George W. Bush*. In the book, the usually reliable Frum strains mightily to argue that, post–September 11, 2001, Bush banished politics from the national stage until petty, divisive attacks by congressional Democrats forced him to respond. Frum writes of the president's imagined bipartisan magnanimity, "What did Bush get in return? On January 4, 2002, Tom Daschle gave a much publicized economic address in which he accused Bush of responsibility for the 'most dramatic fiscal deterioration in our nation's history.'" A few pages later, Frum describes the president's response to this unwarranted broadside: "Bush was only too delighted to play Roosevelt to Daschle's Hoover." Frum then quotes Bush's radio broadcast "the day after Daschle's 'fiscal deterioration' speech," before continuing, "So, at the beginning of December, Bush fired up Air Force One to campaign for his second round of antirecession tax cuts." Frum's formulation is straightforward: Bush responds to Daschle's partisan attack by taking his own political case to the American people. But his sequence of events is straight out of "Doctor Who," given that Bush's early December response *preceded* its putative cause by a month. Coming soon: How the stress of impeachment drove Bill Clinton to dally with interns.

THEIR OX IS GORED: "All nations behave abominably in many ways when they are fighting their enemies, and animals are always caught in the crossfire. ... We watched on television as stray cats in your own compound fled as best they could from the Israeli bulldozers. ... If you have the opportunity, will you please add to your burdens my request that you appeal to all those who listen to you to leave the animals out of this conflict?"—from a letter sent by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals to Yasir Arafat and quoted by *The Washington Post* on February 5. The letter was written in response to a January 26 attack in Jerusalem in which a donkey that had been strapped with explosives was killed. No human beings were hurt.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS: Due to an editing error, the composer William Grant Still inadvertently appeared in last week's issue without his last name ("Anti-American Studies," by Alan Wolfe). We apologize for cutting him off. ■

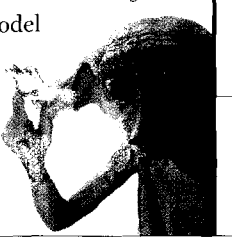
INSIDE THE BOX | Bruce Reed

ANALYZE THAT
Bush says "therapy" won't change Saddam: "He's not the one who has unresolved issues with his father—I am."

WE ARE THE WORLD

Sarandon, Garofalo antiwar ads ask, "What did Iraq do to us?" Theme of upcoming spots: "So Iraq has something to hide. Doesn't everybody?"

EASY MONEY
Bush wants to end taxes on savings as well as dividends: "From now on, if you want to pay taxes, you'll have to work."

SEPARATED AT BIRTH
Russians consider suing creator of *Harry Potter* for using Putin as model for house elf, Dobby. Bush reaction: "When I peered into Vladimir's soul, I knew he looked familiar."


RHYME NOR REASON

Laura Bush cancels poetry symposium for fear ex-laureates would bring up the war: "If we let people speak out at these events, then shallow has no meaning."

SHOOTING BLANKS
More Guns, Less Crime author John Lott created fake persona to defend his own views online: "What good is made-up data without a made-up expert to explain it?"

SEEING RED
OMB Chief Daniels scraps ten-year budget forecasts: "At this rate, we can give all the money away in five."

RIGHT TURN ONLY
Rove promises House GOP that Bush won't triangulate to attract centrists: "Let's put it this way—they are no longer a problem."

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W.'s strange flirtation with tactical nukes.

Fallout

By MICHAEL LEVI

IF YOU WATCHED the Super Bowl in Washington, D.C., you may have seen an ad warning that war with Iraq could end with the use of nuclear weapons. The spot, produced by the antiwar group *MoveOn.org*, is a remake of Lyndon Johnson's famous 1964 campaign commercial, which implied that Barry Goldwater might lead the United States into nuclear war. Like Johnson's ad, which was pulled after running only once, the spot indulges in more than a bit of hyperbole but still contains a troubling kernel of truth.

Since taking office, President George W. Bush has dangerously and unnecessarily blurred the line between conventional and nuclear weapons. Prodded by nuclear weapons scientists and a few narrow-minded ideologues—such as Wayne Allard, chair of the Senate Armed Services Strategic Forces Subcommittee, and Curt Weldon, number two on the House Armed Services Committee—the administration has been groping since early 2001 to find military missions for tactical nuclear weapons. In the past few weeks, administration officials have made not-so-veiled threats that the United States might use nuclear weapons against Iraq. These threats have alarmed the public and hurt America's image—and for no good reason: Tactical nuclear weapons have little if any military value.

FOR MUCH OF the cold war, American strategists planned to use nuclear weapons to repel superior Soviet conventional forces. During the Gulf war—despite possessing overwhelming conventional power—military planners considered using nuclear weapons to incinerate Iraqi stockpiles of biological weapons; they eventually settled on high explosives. Indeed, the Gulf war experience convinced many hawkish military thinkers that tactical nuclear weapons had become obsolete. Under the Clinton administration, the preemptive use of nuclear weapons was not official policy. Yet some analysts remained attached to a few niche roles for battlefield nuclear bombs. Two missions topped their lists: destroying underground bunkers and neutralizing the stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons they often contain. Last March, these activists got a boost from the Bush administration's classified Nuclear Posture Review, which argued that "nuclear weapons could be employed against targets able to withstand nonnuclear attack (for example, deep underground bunkers or bioweapon facilities)." Forced to choose between nuking Saddam Hussein and leaving him be, they asked, which would you pick?

Given the immense power of nuclear weapons, it's natural to imagine them easily obliterating underground hideouts. Saddam, for example, is believed to have several underground command centers, though the United States is unlikely to know the details of these bunkers well enough to be able to penetrate them all with explosives. Nuclear bunker-busters, though, are far less effective than most suppose. The Little Boy bomb dropped over Hiroshima—20,000 times larger than Timothy McVeigh's Oklahoma City bomb—destroyed everything within one mile of ground zero. Yet the same bomb detonated against a granite-walled bunker would be at least 30 times less effective. Even the biggest nuclear bomb in the U.S. arsenal—the nine-megaton B-53—would leave some 200-meter-deep bunkers intact.

And that's the good news. To destroy underground bunkers and chemical or biological agents, nuclear weapons must be detonated at or below the earth's surface. Their radioactive products attach to bits of earth and rock, falling back to the ground within minutes or hours, before their radioactivity has had time to decay. For all their physical destructiveness, the nuclear weapons that exploded 1,000 feet over Hiroshima and Nagasaki produced little lingering fallout; people entering the cities immediately after the attacks were unharmed. In contrast, radioactive fallout from a Hiroshima-sized bomb detonated at ground level would kill civilians as far as 30 kilometers downwind; for our nine-megaton bomb, that distance would be increased more than tenfold. That bomb, if dropped in western Iraq, could contaminate cities as far away as Tel Aviv. American troops would have to avoid contaminated zones, complicating battlefield strategy and tactics.

FORTUNATELY, THE HYPOTHETICAL choice presented by nuclear weapons proponents such as Weldon—nuke Saddam or leave him alone—is a false one. Since before the Gulf war, American engineers have been developing an array of techniques and technologies specially designed to attack underground bunkers. While some work has focused on brute-force solutions—building conventional bombs with bigger blasts and high-speed missiles that penetrate deeper underground—the scientists have also made great strides in learning to disable enemy bunkers without physically destroying them. By collapsing entrance tunnels, severing power lines, bombing communications antennae, and closing ventilation ducts, American forces can "functionally" destroy underground facilities. Special forces, featured in Afghanistan, could play a critical role. In contrast with physically destroying facilities, this strategy would allow American troops to enter bunkers later and collect vital intelligence.

Biological and chemical targets present a different challenge since a U.S. attack could spread deadly agents across the countryside. Indeed, a typical bomb detonated against a facility holding a substantial amount of anthrax could,

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depending on the conditions, kill as many people as a small nuclear weapon. But again, the apparent choices—incinerate the anthrax with a nuclear bomb but spread radioactive fallout, or spread live anthrax but avoid nuclear fallout—are not the only ones. The United States has developed thermobaric bombs that generate high temperatures in closed spaces, neutralizing exposed spores. Air Force laboratories are also developing potent payloads that chemically neutralize agents on contact. And, if chemical or biological agents are accidentally dispersed, American troops can defend themselves with protective gear. In contrast, special clothing cannot provide complete protection against the radioactive fallout from friendly nuclear fire.

America's greatest weakness is in intelligence, not explosive power. Osama bin Laden survived in Afghanistan not because our bombs were too small but because we could not find him. Most of Saddam's bioweapons survived the Gulf war unscathed not because we feared collateral damage but because we did not yet know Saddam's stockpiles existed; even today, inspectors are unable to find Saddam's biological weapons. And, even if we choose to attack North Korea's nuclear program, we will be unable to destroy its uranium-enrichment facilities, not for lack of weaponry but because we do not know where these sites are.

Political fallout from the use, or even threat, of nuclear weapons elevates this discussion beyond mere technical quibbling. The Bush administration seems oblivious to the irony in using nuclear weapons to fight a war against nuclear proliferation. Certainly, the nuclear taboo is not a panacea—Kim Jong Il and Saddam care little about international norms—but it is still valuable. By needlessly claiming that we need nuclear weapons to fill military holes, we confirm all the worst international stereotypes about a trigger-happy Bush administration, undermine our argument that others should forego them, and weaken our coalitions. We weaken our coalitions by undermining global regimes, such as the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, that our allies strongly support.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S "CLARIFICATIONS" are only making things worse. Following a *Los Angeles Times* revelation of nuclear contingency-planning against Iraq, the White House sent Chief of Staff Andy Card to "Meet the Press" to explain. After bumbling through a technical discussion of Iraq's nuclear program, Card asserted unhelpfully that the United States would neither rule in nor rule out nuclear attacks. Two days later, responding to reporters in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Elizabeth Jones—a strange choice for handling this issue—remarked, "Will the United States use limited nuclear weapons in Iraq? The answer is 'No.'" Her carelessly worded comment was promptly interpreted as ruling out limited nuclear strikes (Associated Press), all nuclear strikes (Agence France-Presse), and strikes using nuclear weapons of limited power (Russia's TASS).

Despite the administration's bungled pronouncements, some of its most hawkish backers are getting the right picture. Appearing on "Fox News Sunday" just before Andy Card's interview, Defense Policy Board Chairman Richard Perle argued, "I can't think of a target of interest in a conflict with Iraq that could not be dealt with effectively by conventional weapons, non-nuclear weapons. ... I can't see why we would wish to use a nuclear weapon." The Prince of Darkness isn't about to campaign to ban the bomb, but, like most others, he knows that tactical nuclear weapons aren't very useful. It's time Bush learned the same. ■

Givatayim Dispatch

Dead Center

By YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI

AT LABOR HEADQUARTERS in the only city in Israel to vote for Labor as its largest party, local activists gathered to assess what went wrong in last week's election. Givatayim, they say here, is the "last outpost," a middle-class city contiguous to Tel Aviv's sprawl that was founded in 1922 by Labor organizers and has never abandoned the party. While many Labor branches elsewhere stayed closed even during the campaign, here the party offers daily study groups for pensioners and assistance for new immigrants. Just the way Labor used to be: not merely a party but a movement. And, if Labor hopes to survive, say activists, it must return to the Givatayim model. "We've become cut off from entire parts of the population," complains Lior Strassburg, who organized the party's efforts on college campuses. "Most of the public agrees with us on a Palestinian state and a fence," says Givatayim City Council member Iris Avraham. "But the public wants the right to implement the policies of the left."

The nation's founding party, which once defined the mainstream, Labor has become an aging, sectarian faction with a failed peace platform, competing with the ultra-secular Shinui and the ultra-dovish Meretz for the loyalties of the Ashkenazi middle and upper classes. Barely 4 percent of first-time voters backed Labor in last week's elections; among Russian immigrants, it was 2 percent. The party that invented the Israeli political machine couldn't manage to hang posters at busy intersections. Internal opponents of Labor leader Amram Mitzna publicly accused him of amateurishness, generating devastating headlines during the campaign. Labor Knesset members didn't bother accompanying Mitzna on campaign stops or even putting WE BELIEVE IN YOU, MITZNA stickers on their cars; Shimon Peres simply left the country.

Among Labor activists, rejecting Ariel Sharon's overtures to form a new unity government is seen as the great hope for reviving the party. Only in opposition, they insist, will the party regain the public's trust and offer a coherent alternative. "We made a mistake sitting in the unity government," says Givatayim Party Chairman Yossi Arbel. "You can't be a

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partner with Sharon and then suddenly attack him during elections and expect to have credibility." Activists cite the Likud Party as precedent: Like Labor, the Likud dropped to 19 seats in the 1999 elections, but it rebuilt its institutions and regained its fighting spirit in opposition. But Labor's advocates of opposition are ignoring a crucial difference. After the 1999 debacle, the Likud replaced its failed leader and changed its outmoded ideology, while Labor is clinging to both.

SHARON, WHO REPLACED Benjamin Netanyahu, became the first Likud leader to accept the inevitability of a Palestinian state, dragging his reluctant party to the center. Though the Likud central committee rebuffed Sharon last May and vetoed a Palestinian state, the party hasn't challenged Sharon's insistence that George W. Bush's roadmap calling for such a state after an end to terrorism will form the basis for the next government's policies. Just how traumatic that transition has been for party diehards was evident in a post-election radio interview with Likud Agriculture Minister Tzipi Livni, who repeatedly evaded the question of whether she agreed with Sharon about a Palestinian state. "I'm asking you a fourth time," the irate interviewer pressed, and Livni, a lifelong stalwart of greater Israel, finally conceded that she did.

Labor desperately needs a leader who will repudiate its failed dovish policies and admit that, for now, the peace process is over. No more last chance negotiations with Yasir Arafat. No more Camp David and Taba concessions, which were nullified by the suicide bombings. Yet Mitzna refuses to rule out Arafat as a partner and says negotiations should be resumed where Ehud Barak left off. Sharon understands what Mitzna has not: The Israeli public favors hard-line means for pragmatic ends. The public will only accept a dovish Likudnik or a hawkish Laborite. Sharon won because his tough policy on terrorism, which has restored a measure of normalcy to Israeli society, along with his acceptance of the Bush roadmap, convinced the public that he'd become a dovish Likudnik. Indeed, after last week's election, several prominent liberals told me privately that they had voted for Sharon. Mitzna, by contrast, lost because his insistence that Israel must negotiate under fire and, if that fails, unilaterally withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza convinced the public that he's a dovish Laborite.

But, instead of self-confrontation, Mitzna encourages Labor's self-deception. The reason the public punished us, he insists, is because we joined the unity government rather than fight for our principles in opposition. Mitzna's achievement, says a close aide, has been "to prove that Labor isn't Likud B." But, in the process of separating Labor from its former Likud partner, Mitzna has inflicted far greater damage: He has turned Labor into Meretz B. According to one pre-election poll, fully 70 percent of the public said there was no real difference between Labor and Meretz, the most far-left major party in Israel. For Labor, which aspires to recapture the center, that is a deathblow. Indeed, even just-resigned Meretz leader Yossi Sarid has admitted that his party's decline in the elections was due to his failure to disassociate himself from Arafat. No such admission has come from Mitzna or most other Labor leaders.

Mitzna's self-deception is the culmination of Labor's long process of decline. It has won only two elections in the last 25 years—in 1992 under Yitzhak Rabin and in 1999 under Barak, both ex-generals who succeeded only because they ran as hard-line doves. Labor's failure to read the public mood in these elections is symptomatic of the party's deeper problem: its emotional estrangement from the mainstream. "They approached Israeli society with the cold logic of laboratory technicians," says journalist Danny Ben Simon of the newspaper *Ha'aretz*. "They didn't understand that the people blame Arafat, not Sharon." Mitzna has frankly admitted that he doesn't understand the people he intends to lead. "I have not managed to crack the genetic code of the Israeli voter," he said just before the elections. That embarrassing confession recalled for many Israelis the comment made by Labor elder statesman Yitzhak Ben-Aharon after Labor's first electoral defeat in 1977: The people should be replaced, he said, not the government.

Labor has tried to break out of its elitist, Ashkenazi confines. Barak publicly apologized to the Sephardim for Labor's contempt toward them in the state's early years. Mitzna began and ended his campaign in working-class Sephardi towns. Labor even moved its national headquarters from the Tel Aviv beachfront to south Tel Aviv's Sephardi Hatikvah neighborhood. But those gestures haven't changed the public's perception: During the campaign, Hatikvah's shops displayed only Likud and Shas posters. "Labor has to go beyond gimmicks and do the hard work of finding a common Jewish language with Sephardim, who see the party as a cultural threat," notes Dedi Zucker, a former Meretz MK who broke with the party because of its elitism. Leading political scientist and veteran Laborite Shlomo Avineri argues that Labor should abandon its obsession with a failed peace process and return to its roots as the party of social justice. "Labor has to stop fleeing from economic issues and offering yet another peace plan, because there is now no partner for peace," he says. "Instead, Labor should enter the government and demand the finance ministry and reorient national priorities."

SO FAR, A demoralized Labor shows no sign of replacing the man who has presided over its greatest defeat. Mitzna's party rivals won't challenge him because most Labor voters, in polls, say they want to give him a chance to grow into the job. In a way, it's hard to blame them. Labor's tragedy is that Mitzna has the wrong policies but the right values. Not since Rabin has the party been led by a man who so embodies its old pioneering virtues of modesty and integrity. He inherited a cynical and divisive party two months before elections and persisted without bitterness through a campaign he had no chance of winning. Rather than respond in kind to party backstabbers, he embraced them and put in 17-hour days without complaining about shirkers. He lives simply, and, as

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mayor of Haifa, insisted on driving his own car. He hates spin and speaks his truth, however blandly, refusing to use a teleprompter in campaign commercials. The morning of the elections, voters received a phoned pitch from Labor headquarters: "This is Mitzna," the taped voice said laconically. That night in party headquarters, Mitzna, accompanied by an accordionist, led Labor leaders in singing old Zionist songs. However hokey, it was an authentic moment, allowing Labor to grieve for its lost preeminence.

In truth, the unity government dilemma confronts Labor with two unpalatable options. If it once again joins Sharon, it may miss an opportunity to redefine itself and could alienate what remains of its left-leaning hard core. But, if it doesn't, it risks being blamed for permitting a right-wing religious coalition that could turn Israel into a pariah and further weaken its battered economy. "Let the right create a living hell here, and then the public will turn to us," one bitter activist said to me on election night at Labor's Hatikvah headquarters. That isn't just churlishness; it's what passes for Labor's survival strategy. ■

The White House dumps Iraq's dissidents.

Exiled

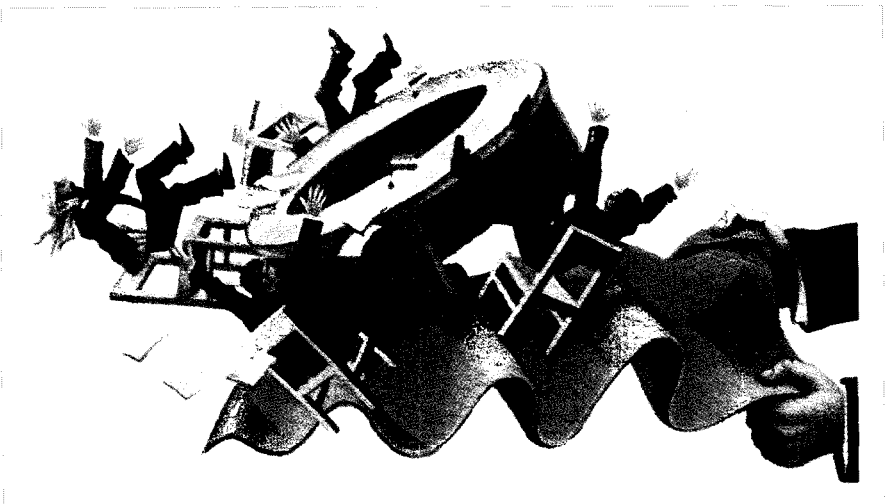
By Janine Zacharia

At 1,100 feet above sea level, in a Kurdish leader's compound in the town of Salahuddin, Iraq, Iraqi National Congress (INC) head Ahmed Chalabi and a group of fellow opposition leaders had hoped in January to declare themselves leaders of a government in exile. The White House appeared to have endorsed the conference via Special Envoy and Ambassador-at-Large for Free Iraqis Zalmay Khalilzad at a December conference in London. And the day before the January 15 Salahuddin meeting, opposition leaders were sitting with Khalilzad at his office in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, poring over logistics.

But the conference never happened. The opposition's official rationale for canceling was that the United States could not provide adequate security. American officials, however, say that's not true. The conference, now tentatively rescheduled for February 15, was in fact put off more for political reasons than security ones. And those political concerns are symptomatic of a more serious rift. Since December, the United States has grown disillusioned with the exiles and is increasingly shunting them off into relatively minor advisory tasks. Washington has already settled on a former American military figure—not an exile leader—who will probably run Iraq's civil administration for an indefinite period immediately after a war. In return, the exiles, who believe they should be in charge of a post-Saddam Hussein Iraq, are growing increasingly disillusioned with the United States.

The Bush administration did have some security concerns about the Salahuddin conference. Administration sources say they worried that holding an opposition conference on Iraqi soil could provoke Saddam into attacking it, prematurely drawing the United States into a military confrontation. But, more than a fear of provoking Saddam, Washington feared that opposition leaders would make good on their vow to create a provisional government in exile, something the Bush administration, which does not want the exiles to make up the core of a government immediately after Saddam is toppled, has rejected in recent weeks.

After the London conference in December, many opposition leaders felt reassured that Washington was finally lining up behind them. Khalilzad told the group, "Today free Iraqis are here to take an important step in their effort to liberate Iraq from the brutal dictatorship of Saddam Hussein's regime." A partnership seemed further forged by the American decision to train 3,000 Iraqi exiles for a "free Iraqi force" at a military base in Hungary. But, as the force was being trained, Pentagon policy-planners decided that the exiles should not play a central role in the overthrow of Saddam. Indeed, the free Iraqi force will serve ancillary functions as scouts and translators rather than as fighters. Meanwhile, the Pentagon appears not to have integrated Kurdish fighters on the ground into its war plan.



Many in the State Department and the White House also have soured on the exiles' role in a future Iraq. According to sources in and close to the administration, American officials have decided that the exiles do not command sufficient popularity within Iraq to lead a liberated nation. Though State has been holding frequent working groups on the future of civil society in Iraq and has some exiles it favors, leading opposition figures mock the plans they are drafting at Foggy Bottom as extremely basic and

RAY BARTKUS

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designed primarily to calm skeptics abroad who believe the United States is not planning for a day-after-Saddam scenario. Of the 15 working groups, five have not met, and most of the others have convened only once or twice. After the December conference in London, President Bush sat down with three opposition leaders—his first encounter with the opposition—and Khalilzad met with a few others. But, since early January, contact between the White House and the opposition has diminished. INC officials say they have not met with Khalilzad in weeks.

While the administration's calculations are primarily political, part of the problem—especially when it comes to communication with the exiles—also seems to be manpower. In addition to being the point man for "Free Iraqis," Khalilzad is also the White House's envoy to Afghanistan and the person charged with the Iran portfolio. Khalilzad is extremely affable. But his managerial skills have been questioned—the White House did so itself when it yanked him as special assistant for Southwest Asia, Near East and North African Affairs several weeks ago. Some observers say the fact that the Free Iraqi portfolio was lumped in with other such significant tasks is itself evidence of an indifference on the administration's part vis-à-vis the exiles. "When he's in Afghanistan, who is handling Iraq?" asks one Defense Department official. "And, when he's dealing with Iraq, who is dealing with Afghanistan? In between you have riots in Iran, and who is dealing with that? Are we heading to failure because one man—and perhaps not the most efficient manager at that—has the portfolio for all three?"

EXILES WHO BELIEVED they would have more than an advisory role in the liberation—they have been branding themselves as an Iraqi version of the Northern Alliance—are growing disillusioned. While Chalabi told me by satellite phone from northern Iraq that he enjoys "excellent relations" with the Bush administration, some longtime INC watchers say he worries that the United States will leave him sidelined in a post-Saddam Iraq. "It is the moment Ahmed Chalabi has worked his entire life for," said one observer of the Iraqi opposition, and he doesn't want to be left out. Others in the opposition are more blunt. "All of us are getting to the point of frustration," says Kato Saadlla of the Iraqi National Front, an exile group that helped select Iraqis to be trained in Hungary and has a following among Kurds in northern Iraq.

Yet the exiles have also undermined their own case by not solidly supporting the Salahuddin conference and continuing to fight amongst themselves. While Chalabi, the exiles' most prominent representative, championed the conference, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), which controls Salahuddin, was wary, especially after Baghdad cut fuel supplies to the north for a few days when it got wind of conference planning. The KDP "was dragging its feet to some extent," said a Defense Department official. "Because, once you have this Iraqi group meet and perhaps declare a government in exile, it's going to be a higher authority than [KDP leader Massoud] Barzani."

Into the vacuum created by the split between the exiles and Washington has stepped Iran. With the January conference scuttled, Chalabi took off for Tehran. There, he was greeted with open arms by the religious leadership, which offered to provide security for a conference in northern Iraq if the United States would not. From there, he headed to northern Iraq, where he has again vowed to gather all 65 members of a council formed in London to declare a provisional government, perhaps only days before the United States wages war. This past week, Chalabi and other exiles tried once again to patch up their differences. Chalabi, Barzani, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan leader Jalal Talabani, and a Shia exile leader, sources say, agreed to form a united leadership.

Yet the United States, surprisingly, does not seem particularly concerned about Tehran's moves. "We have in the past worked with the Iranians constructively on discreet areas of mutual interest," said one American official, referring to U.S.-Iranian cooperation in setting up a new Afghan government. "At this point, I'm not aware of anything that has given people concern [about Iran's involvement]." Indeed, some administration officials have been reaching out to the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), an Iraqi exile group based in Iran. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz recently wrote to SCIRI's leader, Muhammad Baqr Al Hakim, to invite him to send people for American training in Hungary. Similarly, other Pentagon hawks "know there is a practical need to deal with Iran on this," says one exile source.

AS THE ADMINISTRATION freezes out many of the exiles, it continues to fight internally about the post-Saddam era. While Washington has already decided on a policy of not supporting a provisional government of exiles before an invasion, some opposition supporters at the Pentagon are still arguing internally for such a structure. They contend that to ensure the U.S.-trained Iraqi exiles are afforded international legal protections, such as being treated as legitimate prisoners of war and not considered illegal combatants, they need a provisional government to fight for.

Officials are also still wrangling over whom to back in the long term. Many at the State Department and the CIA who oppose any role for Chalabi, the INC, and other well-known exiles promote other groups, such as the Iraqi National Accord, headed by London-based Ayad Allawi. State is said to be particularly infatuated with Adnan Pachachi, former Iraqi foreign minister and ambassador to the United Nations. It has also recently been pressing the opposition to form a new, smaller leadership group—or steering committee—more to State's liking, before they hold another meeting. The Pentagon and some opposition groups say this is undemocratic.

Additional debates about what some call "the day after the day after" continue. U.S. officials argue over whether Islam

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should be the national religion, as SCIRI, the KDP, and the Iraqi National Accord want, and over whether an ethnically diverse country such as Iraq should join the Arab League. In the more immediate term, it is still not clear whether the United States will send a delegation to the planned February 15 conference—or if the conference will even take place at all. The Bush administration, which once saw the exiles as crucial allies in liberating Iraq, increasingly views them as unrealistic and unreliable. And the feeling is mutual. ■

How senators can win presidential elections.

Light Touch

By SAM TANENHAUS

ONE OF THE more curious political spectacles in recent weeks has been the parade of Democratic senators—John Edwards, John Kerry, and Joe Lieberman—who have declared their intentions to seek the presidency. A fourth, Senator Bob Graham, is said to be mulling a run; a fifth, Senator Tom Daschle, pulled back after giving it serious thought.

These guys must know that history is against them. Since 1900, only two men have leapt directly from the Senate to the White House: Warren G. Harding in 1920 and John F. Kennedy in 1960. Since Kennedy's victory, only three senators have even captured their party's nomination, and each did so in years when defeat in the general election was virtually preordained: Barry Goldwater in 1964, George McGovern in 1972, and Bob Dole in 1996.

Yet today's contenders seem confident they can do better. Why? Perhaps because the Senate is not the place it used to be. "If Lyndon Johnson were to return to the Senate, he wouldn't recognize it," Elizabeth Drew observed in *The New York Review of Books* in December. Today's senators "are like independent contractors: they raise their own money, have their own understandings with their constituents and supporters. Especially on the Democratic side, there's nothing like a party establishment that could pull people into line."

The old Senate, for all its glories, was a notoriously bad place to build a presidential resumé. The attributes of first-class legislators—a knack for parliamentary maneuvers and an appetite for backroom deal-making and shameless horse-trading—translate badly into presidential campaigns. Presidents are supposed to be starry-eyed tribunes of the people, not canny Beltway pros. That's why semi-obscure governors such as Bill Clinton or Jimmy Carter fare better than Senate heavyweights. It's also why lone-wolf senators such as Gary Hart, John McCain, and Eugene McCarthy, all of whom spent much of their Senate careers alienating their colleagues, have outperformed respected party leaders such as Howard Baker and Bob Dole, whose legislative skills made them appear to be hacks and trimmers.

But the familiar equation, strong senator equals weak candidate, may no longer apply because the idea of a strong senator has almost disappeared from politics. The legislative giants of the past—Lyndon Johnson, Robert Taft, William Fulbright, Everett Dirksen, Barry Goldwater—rose to the fore at a time when the chamber itself sat at the epicenter of national politics and played a key role in controversies from McCarthyism and civil rights to Vietnam and Watergate. Not anymore. Today, the Senate is firmly in eclipse. Its performance during the George W. Bush years has been a study in irrelevance. The feckless debates over Iraq and homeland security; the Bush administration's mounting assertions of executive authority; the comical demise of Trent Lott, whose replacement, Bill Frist, was plainly handpicked by the White House. All have shown the Senate to be institutionally weaker than at any time in recent memory.

And consider the Senate as a law-making body. The last really significant Senate-based legislation, the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill, never resonated with the public. And why should it have? Rooted in the cloistered world of politics and lobbyists, its provisions were remote from the lived experience of most voters, for whom the Senate has become simply a mannerly edition of the House: another venue of dreary cyclical tussles over budgets, tax bills, and slice-of-the-pie entitlements—only without the colorful ideologues who make the House entertaining. The last legislator to build a national base on the Hill was a congressman, Newt Gingrich, whose lieutenant, Tom DeLay, is still more visible than most senators.

But, as the Senate grows weaker, it becomes a more promising stage for presidential contenders. Nowadays, even high-profile senators tend to detach themselves from the daily grind of legislation and treat the Senate as a launching pad for appearances on CNN and "Meet the Press" and sententious op-ed pieces.

This may explain why the model for senators aiming for the presidency has become Kennedy, whose own campaign, written off as an anomaly all these years, looks much more relevant in 2003. In many respects, Kennedy was ahead of his time. Like today's senators, he was in the Senate but not of it. He was less a legislator than a personality—the glamorous scion of a powerful family with a beautiful, aristocratic wife, his war exploits written up in *The New Yorker* and *Reader's Digest*. He played on this perfectly in 1960. While rivals like Johnson and Hubert Humphrey ran on their glittering legislative records, Kennedy barely mentioned his—and for good reason: It was so slight as to be invisible. His best-known senatorial act was his book *Profiles in Courage*, an homage to the institution, which belied his own eight years in the Senate, which were a profile in absenteeism. He failed to take a stand against Joe McCarthy, whose rampages tore

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apart the Senate. He was chronically absent during key quorum calls. He didn't even vote on important legislation. According to Robert Dallek's book *Lone Star Rising*, Johnson grumbled at the time, "Jack was out kissing babies while I was passing bills."

But not exclusively. Kennedy was also diligently assembling a top-notch organization for the primaries while his speechwriters, Richard Goodwin and Theodore Sorensen, drafted presidential-sounding orations on the big issues of the day. "It was the goddamndest thing," a mystified Johnson later said of Kennedy's election. "He never said a word of importance in the Senate, and he never did a thing. But somehow . . . he managed to create the image of himself as a shining intellectual, a youthful leader who would change the face of the country."

THIS IS THE model Edwards, Kerry, and Lieberman all appear to be following, each in his own fashion. Edwards is often depicted as a Bill Clinton clone because of his Southern accent and middle-class populism. But his career path, with its sharp upward trajectory, closely parallels Kennedy's rapid climb. Kennedy was a top contender for the vice-presidential nomination in 1956, four years into his first term. Edwards, elected to the Senate in 1998 at age 45, made Al Gore's V.P. short list after only two years in the Senate. When Beltway pundits such as Stuart Rothenberg dismiss Edwards as "a pretty boy," they sound like Johnson mocking Kennedy the "lightweight" and "playboy." The charge, in any case, clashes with the opposite knock against Edwards that, in his role on the Senate Judiciary Committee, he's too rough with witnesses, resorting to tactics that are "almost a parody of the bad-guy trial lawyer," as *National Review* wrote last spring.

But an aggressive style is a useful calling card for a young, immature-seeming candidate. Kennedy won his first debate with Richard Nixon by being the aggressor, thus dispelling the notion that he couldn't stand up to a two-term vice president. In the Senate, too, Kennedy cultivated a reputation for rough sport. Today, it's his hothead brother Robert who's best remembered for his "ruthless" pursuit of Teamsters kingpin Jimmy Hoffa. But it was Jack Kennedy who actually sat on the rackets committee (Bobby was an investigator), and the brothers were perceived to be acting in concert. GOP senators complained that "'the Kennedy boys had hijacked the committee," Evan Thomas writes in *Robert Kennedy*, his recent biography. Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, dismayed by the subpoenas sent to his cronies, warned, "I'm not sure we want a prosecutor as a president"—the prosecutor being Jack Kennedy.

If Edwards represents the latest edition of a Kennedy-style Senate candidate, John Kerry is a Kennedy redux, with his Massachusetts base, aristocratic lineage, family fortune, and liberal record tempered by wartime heroics in Vietnam. (When he was young, Kerry actually used to sign his name "JFK.") He even has his own *Profiles in Courage*-cum-*PT-109* on the way, courtesy of historian Douglas Brinkley, who is writing an authorized biography of Kerry's war years, titled *Tour of Duty* and due out next year. Since Kerry is 59, 16 years older than Kennedy was when he ran in 1960, the book, like the photo in Kerry's office that shows him posing with John Lennon at a peace rally, implies a kind of nostalgia.

But Kerry is not just indulging in sentiment. Strategically, he is adhering more closely to the Kennedy model than anyone else. Like Kennedy, he's ahead of the pack in putting together a disciplined machine built to win primaries. Kerry has also been making Kennedy-like foreign policy assertions full of high purpose, though studiedly devoid of hard content. After Kerry's appearance last June on "Meet the Press," it was difficult to parse his views on Iraq. However, the point was not to commit himself to any policy but simply to appear commanding. Here's Kennedy, in one of his most admired campaign speeches, delivered in January 1960: "In the challenging, revolutionary '60s, the American presidency will demand more than ringing manifestos issued from the rear of the battle. It will demand that the president place himself in the very thick of the fight, that he care passionately about the fate of the people he leads." And here's Kerry last week: "We live in serious times facing serious challenges, and we cannot afford a mere rhetorical presidency. . . . Too often President Bush offers slogans not solutions, and too often his solutions would take America backwards."

Lieberman's Kennedy riff isn't quite as clean as Kerry's. Of the leading contenders, he is the most classically senatorial, making much, for instance, of the homeland security measures he pushed through the Governmental Affairs Committee. But he has offset all this gravitas with deft, Kennedy-like maneuvers. *His* new book, a treacly diary of the 2000 campaign, is short on policy and instead emphasizes his one true credential: He was the Democratic vice-presidential nominee in 2000, when the Democrats were robbed. At the same time, Lieberman has been working another Kennedy angle: religion. Kennedy entered the 1960 campaign presumably handicapped by his Catholicism. But it was his opponents who were forced to tiptoe around the issue even as Kennedy mined the huge Catholic vote. Lieberman, too, has turned the question on its head, by throwing it in the face of his opponents. "[M]y faith is at the center of who I am," he said at his campaign kickoff. "I'll not hesitate to talk about faith when it's relevant or to invoke God's name." This is as naked an appeal to the religious right as any Republican candidate could ever make.

INDEED, THE MOST important lesson Kennedy offers today's Senate presidential contenders is his strategic decision to attack the Republicans not from the left but from the right. Instead of promising a revived New Deal, as Johnson did, or stitching together a coalition of liberal interest groups, as Humphrey did, Kennedy ran as a cold war hawk, accusing Dwight D. Eisenhower and his vice president, Nixon, of letting the Soviets gain a nuclear advantage (the "missile gap") and of being soft on Fidel Castro. When a crisis came—the Soviets' downing of a U-2 spy plane in May 1960—it was Kennedy who hit the administration hard while Senate grandees were reduced to

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bleatings of patriotic support.

Kerry and Lieberman, too, have staked out rightward positions on foreign policy, again following a central Kennedy principle: The incumbent may ultimately be weakest where he now appears strongest—in his managing of the war. Kerry in particular has criticized Bush's handling of the war on terror, going so far as to say that Bush's failure to send American troops into Tora Bora enabled Osama bin Laden to get away.

On domestic policy, only Edwards, the self-styled champion of "regular people" and sworn enemy of HMOs, has reverted to the Clinton rather than the Kennedy model. He was also the first candidate to counter Bush's stimulus package. Ultimately, this may prove "too senatorial." Kerry and Lieberman are wisely leaving it to Daschle and Max Baucus to haggle with the administration over the budget and the dividend tax cut. Kennedy, too, stood on the sidelines as Johnson flexed his muscles as majority leader, pushing through a civil rights bill. Johnson thought it would prove his presidential mettle. In fact, it mired him in factional disputes. He got the credit but also the headaches. Once the general election began, Kennedy, the legislative nonentity, nimbly leapt on the Democrat platform to accuse Eisenhower of being weak on civil rights.

Kennedy had one clear advantage over his new Senate heirs. He did not have to run against a popular incumbent, only against a successor, Nixon, whom Eisenhower made no secret of disliking. Even so, Kennedy's gambling strategy was an underdog's and an outsider's. "The young senator could not, in the deepest sense, ever win the 1960 campaign: he could only hope and wait for his opponent to lose it," as Eisenhower's speechwriter, Emmet John Hughes, put it in *The Ordeal of Power*, one of the period's more astute political books.

But then every election is lost as much as it is won. The best any Democratic contender can do for the moment is be in position to react if and when an opening comes. In yesterday's Senate, with its "party establishment" keeping everyone in line, only a maverick had any chance of doing this. But, in its current eclipse, the Senate has joined the statehouse as a provincial stage on which adept "lightweights" can hone their solo acts while they stalk the big prize. ■

How the Dems created Al Sharpton.

Black Power

By MICHELLE COTTLE

GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

IT'S 8:45 A.M., and the growing entourage in the lobby of the Hilton is drawing curious stares from passing guests. A half-dozen black men, dressed to the nines, have been hovering at the elevator bank for the past half an hour, laughing, chatting, and scanning the Sunday papers. Every so often a newcomer joins the huddle to be greeted with clasped hands and cries of welcome. Out in the parking lot, several dark luxury cars stand at the ready, clustered around a long, white Cadillac limousine. A driver pops his head in from the cold to see when the group will be ready to roll. No one knows. The caravan was supposed to be on its way to the Reedy River Missionary Baptist Church by 8:30 to catch the tail end of early worship service. But Democratic presidential aspirant Al Sharpton is running late this morning—a not infrequent occurrence—and no amount of gentle prodding can rush the good reverend. As the men anxiously check their watches and pull cell phones from their coat pockets, a middle-aged white guy ambles over. "You're all waiting for someone, aren't you?" he posits with a goofy grin. "Mind if I guess who?" The group looks decidedly not amused. "Al Sharpton!" the man crows. "I knew it! I heard on the news that he was in town!"

Indeed, as Sharpton began his unofficial campaign swing through South Carolina over the Martin Luther King Jr. weekend, most upstate residents caught their first glimpse of the infamous New York agitator on the Saturday and Sunday local news, where Sharpton expressed dismay at Greenville County's refusal to observe the holiday honoring the slain civil rights leader. (Unlike city workers, county employees don't get the day off.) Others first spotted the jowly reverend in the Sunday papers, which carried reports of Sharpton's Saturday-night rally at a nearby church, where he criticized political leaders for turning their backs on civil rights issues and made a particular point of accusing Democrats of taking the black vote for granted. Though not overtly negative, the coverage was pretty much what you'd expect from a visit by Sharpton: heavy on themes of racial injustice and inequality. It was, in short, precisely the sort of Sharpton campaign story that's giving national Democrats nightmares.

Well aware of the havoc wreaked by the bomb-throwing reverend in many a New York election, party strategists are exceedingly nervous about Sharpton taking his racialist political theater to the national stage. Many fear that, if not shown the proper obeisance by the party and its eventual nominee, he will use his oratorical gifts and trademark grievance politics to convince minority voters that they might as well stay home on Election Day. At the same time, Dems worry about what will happen if their party gets *too* snuggly with the reverend. In the early '90s, Bill Clinton helped erase

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his party's association with identity politics; a return to the old sectarian ways could drive itchy swing voters straight into the compassionately conservative embrace of George W. Bush. With Sharpton in the race, warns one Democratic player, "the question is whether he will destroy the national party the way he did the Democrats in New York."

But, as much as Democrats might point the finger at Sharpton, he is more a symptom than a cause of the party's racial woes. Since Clinton left center stage, larger forces have propelled the Democrats back toward the kind of racially divisive infighting that plagued them in the 1980s. A combination of factors—the absence of racially unifying figures, black or white; the Democrats' electoral disappointments of 2000 and 2002; the GOP's recent racial controversies; and the early South Carolina primary—pretty much guaranteed that race would loom large in the Democratic primaries. Opportunist par excellence that he is, Sharpton has simply stepped into the breach.

DESPITE HIS TECHNICOLOR reputation, in person Sharpton isn't an especially electric figure. He does not radiate energy or charisma or even personableness. When the reverend finally rolled out of the hotel elevator just before 9 a.m., he had no handshakes, smiles, or warm words for the men who'd been standing around waiting for him for the past hour. Cell phone clutched to his ear, Sharpton barely glanced their way as he ambled across the lobby. It was left to his lawyer and erstwhile campaign counselor, Sanford "Sandy" Rubenstein, to herd the puzzled group into the waiting cars.

Sharpton even seems a little uncomfortable with one-on-one retail campaigning. While he will stand still for an endless stream of cheek kisses and photos, his manner often appears a bit strained, his smile a bit forced as well-wishers file past. He recognizes that people need to express their appreciation of his work, but he doesn't seem to enjoy the interaction. Much of the time, Sharpton looks bored, sleepy, and just the teensiest bit surly.

When the reverend steps into the pulpit, however, the result is pure magic. At his two Sunday sermons in Greenville—one at Reedy River and one at Jesse Jackson's old church, Tabernacle Baptist—Sharpton displayed the awesome oratorical gifts that had him dubbed "the boy wonder preacher" by the tender age of ten. He works without notes and insists he doesn't know what he'll say until he steps to the microphone. Eyes heavy, face solemn, he starts slowly, his voice harsh and gravelly as he introduces the morning's theme: Black America risks forgetting how far it has come and at how high a price. He then weaves in personal anecdotes, news items, statistics, bible verses, and gospel lyrics to illustrate his point. His voice warms; his eyes grow wide and bright; he waves his arms and glides around the pulpit, whipping the crowd into a frenzy. Calls to "Tell it, preacher!" and "Say so!" fill the sanctuary. At Reedy River, a woman in a glorious purple hat stands and flings her lace hanky at Sharpton in exultation. Slipping into the home stretch, the reverend draws the crowd into a call and response—a staple among many black ministers but rarely executed as well as by Sharpton. His voice soaring more in song than in speech, Sharpton establishes a hypnotic rhythm: "I don't know what you read in the newspapers!" Pause a beat. "But this is my story!" Beat. "This is my song!" Beat. "Praising my savior!" Beat. "All the day long!" (With these well-known hymn lyrics, Sharpton can wrap even the controversies of his past in the gospel.) "I been up!" Beat. "I been down!" Beat. "I been stabbed!" Beat. "I been criticized!" Beat. "But through it all!" Beat. "I-I-I-I *learned* to trust in Jesus!"

As recent weeks have shown, Sharpton can modulate his oratorical gifts to woo audiences well beyond his base. Even skeptical party strategists and media types expressed admiration at Sharpton's crowd-wowing performance a few weeks ago at the NARAL Pro-Choice America gathering in Washington. "It was bizarre," notes a colleague, "to see all those upper-class white women cheering for him." Sharpton, of course, delights in having delivered a wake-up call to the competition: "The other night they got their first warning that they had better start paying attention to me."

There's little danger of Sharpton being ignored in this race. Many Dems shudder at the thought that the reverend could draw enough support—especially down South, where Democrats rely heavily on the black vote—to carry a slate of delegates to the national convention. Party activists point anxiously to the racial divide that emerged during Jesse Jackson's 1988 presidential run. Careful, eleventh-hour negotiations were required at the Atlanta convention that summer to get Jackson supporters on board with nominee Michael Dukakis. A similar scenario starring Sharpton could prove considerably worse, say Dems. After all, by 1988, Jackson had moderated his image and enjoyed multiracial support. Just as importantly, he was willing to negotiate for the good of the party. (Or, as some Dems less charitably put it, he could be bought off for a few million dollars and the use of a campaign jet.) Sharpton, by contrast, has shown repeatedly in New York a great willingness to sink his party over a perceived lack of ideological purity or even personal pique. Says one alarmed presidential campaign veteran, "Going hat in hand to Jesse Jackson is one thing, but owing Al Sharpton is quite another."

BUT, IF DEMOCRATS are forced to go begging to Sharpton, they largely have themselves to blame, having failed to anticipate and respond to the many factors conspiring to return racial politics to the forefront of the party. First among these is Clinton's departure from the White House. Donna Brazile, the Democrats' go-to gal where the black vote is concerned, points out that, fair or not, part of the problem the party now faces "is that the bar was set so high under Clinton." Nowhere were Clinton's consummate political skills more evident than in the overwhelming, unwavering support he enjoyed from black voters. The appeal was partly political, partly personal, and near impossible to define completely. Some Dems point to Clinton's record in Arkansas and his credentials within the

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civil rights community. Clinton went to all the civil rights meetings, says Brazile, "and, when he was governor, he would invite all the leaders to come and brief him and talk to him." He thus arrived on the national scene with an existing "Arkansas posse" of black compatriots—Ernie Green, Rodney Slater, and Carol Willis, just to name a few. But, ultimately, Clinton's appeal was grounded less in his civil rights background and ties to black leaders than in his deep personal comfort with black America. He didn't just tap blacks for his Cabinet and staff, says former Gore speechwriter Kenneth Baer. "When he was palling around on the golf course, Vernon Jordan is who he chose to hang out with." Many attribute this comfort to Clinton's Southern roots. "Southerners are generally just more comfortable around black people because they were around black people so much growing up," says Democratic campaign veteran and South Carolina native Donnie Fowler. Adds Brazile, "He knew the walk. He knew the talk. He even knew the food." At a 2000 fund-raiser featuring celebs like Lionel Ritchie and Quincy Jones, Brazile recalls with a chuckle, "When it came time for people to pick out their meal from the buffet, Clinton went straight for the black-eyed peas." This intimacy with the community allowed Clinton to pursue policies others would never have dared. "There was an element of respect," says Brazile, "so that, even when people disagreed with him on something like welfare reform or the three-strikes laws, there was always the knowledge that Bill Clinton was on our side." Republicans' impeachment efforts against Clinton only solidified his black support. "People said, 'There must be something good about this guy if Republicans are so hell-bent to get him,'" says Fowler. As a result, when Clinton was the face of the Democrats, no black leader could credibly argue that the party took black voters for granted—as Sharpton now charges daily.

The second factor contributing to the Dems' racial predicament is the departure of Clinton's chosen heir, Al Gore. Though lacking Clinton's personal magic, Gore enjoyed tremendous advantages from his association with the president. And Gore had his own long-standing ties to the black community, in part thanks to his father's record on civil rights. "Ben Hooks, former executive director of the NAACP and a native Tennesseean, grew up very close to the Gore family," recalls Brazile. And, of course, Gore's biggest defeat—the Florida recount battle—sealed his reputation among black voters. Virtually overnight, he became, as one Democratic strategist put it, "the most aggrieved man in America." Black Americans felt his pain especially acutely, because of the allegations that Republicans had conspired to keep black voters from the polls. Gore's defeat became black America's as well.

While Gore enjoyed the history and credibility with black voters to challenge Sharpton's racial strategy (it's notable Sharpton didn't run against him in 2000), the current crop of Democratic candidates lacks this advantage. Each campaign, of course, has its prepared spin about why its guy will appeal to black voters. Lieberman's people point to his association with the Florida fiasco, his involvement with civil rights marches in the 1960s, and his religiosity; Edwards has the Southern thing going for him, as well as his championing of the little guy during his years as a trial lawyer; Gephardt has his ties to the Congressional Black Caucus, for whom he has done many favors over the years; and so on. And all of the 2004 contenders are scrambling to hook up with the black staffers, opinion leaders, and local politicians who can help them plead their case with black voters. But none of them has the range of deeper, long-term associations that Clinton or Gore could call on. "They just lack that natural [connection]," says Brazile.

YET ANOTHER REASON for the political vacuum Sharpton has stepped into is, of course, the fall from grace of his onetime mentor Jesse Jackson. For years now, Sharpton has been positioning himself to inherit Jackson's mantle as the voice of black America—an inheritance that Jackson himself sped along with a series of scandals both personal and financial. If Jackson were running this time, or (more likely) still had the credibility to help rally black voters behind one of the other candidates, there's little chance Sharpton would have jumped into the fray. But, with Jackson's decline from prominence, Sharpton has been free to pitch his own run as the sequel to Jackson's historic 1988 showing.

Once upon a time, it looked like Jackson's 1988 bid might lay the groundwork for something better. Though largely forgotten, the first sequel to Jackson's candidacy was the 1992 presidential bid of former Virginia Governor Doug Wilder. Wilder's campaign lasted about 15 seconds but nonetheless seemed to offer a compelling model in which black elected politicians, accustomed to working from within the system, could take a larger role in national politics, marginalizing racial firebrands like Sharpton. This, obviously, hasn't happened—and the reason is straightforward. The majority of viable presidential contenders come from the ranks of senators and governors, and today—more than a decade after Wilder's candidacy—there is not a single black senator or governor in the country. To some extent, say some Dems, this is because many of the party's most talented black pols hail from the South, where increasingly any Democratic candidate—especially a minority one—faces an uphill battle for statewide office. Others point more specifically to the racial gerrymandering of congressional districts, arguing that perversely it can hurt a minority representative's chances for higher office. "The center of gravity is so different in a majority-minority district," says one party strategist. "To win statewide office, you'd then have to turn around and reinvent yourself." What's more, says Brazile, even talented black candidates often get overlooked when money and resources are being distributed by the party. (She cites Oregon State Treasurer Jim Hill's gubernatorial primary run last year as a prime example.)

Internal party politics have proved to be another sore point of late. Many blacks—including Sharpton—were upset by the way the Democratic National Committee archly dismissed former Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson when he

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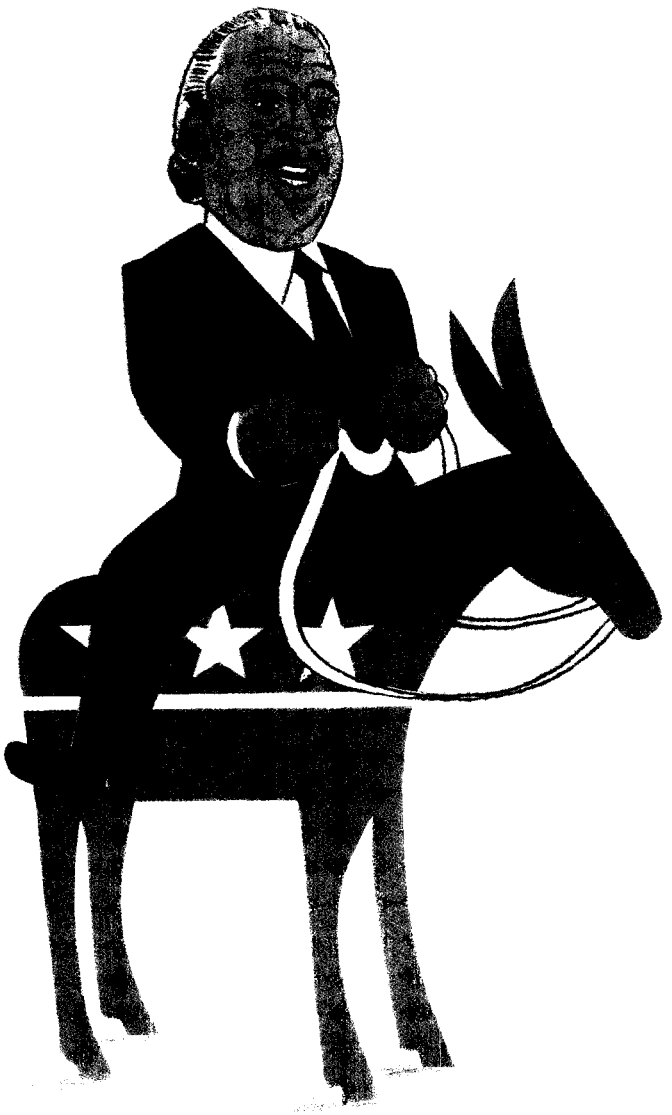
challenged Terry McAuliffe for committee chairman in 2001. Likewise, there was grumbling after new House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi ignored Louisiana Representative William Jefferson's interest in being named head of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, instead tapping her California chum Representative Robert Matsui. Both decisions may have been correct on the merits, but more than a few black leaders felt they should have been more involved in the consultation process. (Of course, such recriminations are always strongest when the party loses—and doesn't have the White House patronage machine to dole out goodies to keep constituent groups happy.) Brazile even points to a January Associated Press story about the candidates' top campaign advisers in which "not one campaign had the good sense to list the number of prominent African-Americans supporting their candidacies." It was a strategic error, says Brazile, "and why the Al Sharptons of the world will always have a foothold for sticking their finger in the eye of the Democratic Party."



EDEL RODRIGUEZ

In the coming election, Democrats have only heightened the racial anxiety by scheduling the South Carolina primary right on the heels of Iowa and New Hampshire. At least 40 percent of the state's Democratic primary voters are black, and Sharpton—who will be hard-pressed to make more than a token showing in lily-white Iowa or New Hampshire—intends to take full advantage. His white competitors, meanwhile, are scrambling to establish their racial bona fides. Already, we're seeing the absurd spectacle of John Edwards vowing to uphold the NAACP's economic boycott of South Carolina to protest the presence of the Confederate battle flag on the grounds of the state capitol—a boycott that many of the state's black leaders, including powerful Representative Jim Clyburn, have rejected. (As the other campaigns snickered of Edwards's pandering, "How are you supposed to run a primary campaign without spending money in the state?")

The Democrats are also suffering, ironically, from the GOP's racial controversies. The past few months have seen the Bush administration's decision to reintroduce affirmative action into the public debate by coming out in opposition to the University of Michigan's affirmative action program, now before the Supreme Court; Trent Lott's unfortunate—and costly—remarks at Strom Thurmond's one-hundredth birthday party; and the White House's nomination and subsequent renomination to the federal bench of Mississippi Judge Charles Pickering, whose position in a cross-burning case has made him anathema to the civil rights community. Cumulatively, these incidents signal that the era of good feelings and harmony proclaimed in the wake of the September 11 attacks is officially over. The country has returned to its usual divisions—race central among them.

All of which, one can only presume, is just fine by Al Sharpton, who, after all, made his name by fueling racial discord. When asked, Sharpton denies he's running to be the spokesman for black America and insists that his message will resonate well beyond his traditional base. But, at times, even he can't help cracking wise about just how alien he is to white voters. After a mad dash between campaign stops in Greenville, the reverend tucked into a late lunch at an all-you-can-eat food bar. As he chowed down on veggies and fried chicken, a stream of well-wishers—all black—wandered over for autographs and pictures. As Sharpton rose to leave, the white manager of the restaurant stopped him for a quick photo. The reverend obliged, and then, cruising past his waiting entourage on his way to the restroom, mumbled dryly, "He thought I was John Kerry." For the rest of the Democratic field, race is nothing to joke about this season. And, unless Democrats begin to deal with the structural forces threatening to recreate the racial fratricide of the '80s, it may not be a laughing matter in the party for a long time to come. ■

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Disclosures, Large and Lesser

NOSTALGIA? THAT WOULD be insane. Still, there's a chill on the back of the neck, a hint of the passage of time, when Traudl Junge's face appears. This documentary is called **Blind Spot: Hitler's Secretary** (Sony Pictures Classics). She is eighty-one years old here, neat, composed. She tells us that when she was twenty-two, Hitler engaged her as one of his private secretaries, and she stayed with him to the end. As she talks of his courtesy and care, of his affection for his dog and other such matters, we realize that after Junge and her contemporaries are gone, all that will be left of the twentieth century is history. Not many of us would want to collect personal souvenirs of Hitler—his shaving brush, his favorite tie; but this film reminds us that the minutiae of life in the past, actual life as it was traversed day by day, are often smothered by the large events around them. Would the loss of those details matter? Yes: Junge's recollections of Hitler are like glimpses backstage at an indescribable tragedy. The research of future historians may unearth more facts, but it cannot supplant the verity of this woman's being, her voice, our look into the eyes that actually saw.

Other interviews have been filmed with people who knew Hitler. The most frightening for me is Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's interview in 1975 of Richard Wagner's daughter-in-law Winifred. She remembers the way Hitler played with her children and says firmly that she would be happy to see him walk through the door again. Somewhere in the past, too, I saw a documentary in which a Hitler valet, in a manner much like Junge's, reminisces about an amiable, considerate man. The memories of secretaries and valets do not contradict the horror surrounding them: they magnify it (if that is possible).

Blind Spot was made by André Heller and Othmar Schmiderer, Austrians who persuaded Junge to break the fifty-five-year silence that she had maintained about her Hitler years. Perhaps she decided to speak because she was terminally ill, though she doesn't look it. Heller and Schmiderer quite wisely did very little to "cinematize" the ninety-minute interview. The camera moves occasionally to change our view of the seated woman, and sometimes—I don't know why—we get a shot of her looking at a screen that displays a previous shot of her. Even less would have been even more.

Junge doesn't tell us a great deal that hasn't been known for some time, but at the least she corroborates and, especially, she was there. She was *there*, in that private office and, later, in that bunker. She tells us that she knew nothing of the camps, though she heard Hitler mention them once, and knew nothing of the exterminations. In her case this is more credible than with other such protestants: Junge did not, like others who said they did not know, live in a community from which people disappeared. The most gripping part of her account is, inevitably, the final days in the bunker. Hitler dictated his last will and testament to her, and we figuratively glimpse the man who had caused millions and millions and millions of deaths calmly preparing for his own. She and others tried to persuade Frau Goebbels to let her children be evacuated, but the mother felt that her children's lives in postwar Germany, with the Goebbels name, would be unbearable, so they died with their parents.

Junge says nothing of her own rescue from the bunker or how she returned to her hometown, Munich. She does tells us that, one day in the postwar years, she passed a memorial to Sophie Scholl and first felt guilt at her ignorance of what had been happening in Germany. (Scholl and some of her fellow students, anti-Hitler activists, are the subject of *The White Rose*, Michael Verhoeven's agonizing film about the students' efforts, their capture, their execution.) Junge was struck especially by the fact that Scholl and her friends were executed—let's use the right word, decapitated—in 1942, the year she went to work for Hitler.

Blind Spot had its premiere at the Berlin Film Festival in 2002. Junge, hospitalized, died a few hours later. So the monstrous twentieth century recedes into libraries; and so a small cog in the mechanism of that monstrosity bequeaths us her memory of it in a quiet, measured way. That tone! Among other mysteries, we are left wondering how a woman who had been near the center of such things could still look and sound like a human being.

Life is a cabaret, old chum. If we hadn't learned that from the John Kander–Fred Ebb musical *Cabaret*, we now get another chance at this wisdom in **Chicago** (Miramax), Rob Marshall's film of a later Kander-Ebb musical. The 1996 Broadway revival of the show—the revival that prompted this film—is based on Bob Fosse's original and very apt staging in 1975. It is done like a big-band vaudeville act of the 1920s, which is the period of the story. The band is on stage throughout, and the plot scenes, just like the musical numbers, are done in front of the band as part of the "show." In the film, not everything could be performed in front of a band, but all the scenes that take place elsewhere are intercut with musical versions of the very same scenes being performed on a glitzy cabaret stage. Get it now, old chum, about life and the cabaret?

Chicago has a touch of historical interest. In the 1920s a journalist named Maurine Watkins enrolled in George Pierce Baker's famous playwriting course at Yale and wrote a play based on her experience of Al Capone's Chicago. The play made its way to Broadway success, in part because it highlighted a city's corruption, and it was filmed twice. By the time the musical of *Chicago* came along in 1975, the raw facts about Capone and corruption were well cooked. The current Broadway revival has to try still harder to seem daring. Marshall's film sensibly downplays the exposé aspect and concentrates on the numbers as numbers, loud and leggy, with a skein of story connecting them.

Roxie Hart is a showgirl, married, who murders her ratty boyfriend. A sly lawyer named Billy Flynn specializes in such cases, gets her off, and makes her a celebrity. She teams up in an act with another showgirl-criminal, Velma Kelly, and they wow audiences. (The original play had a thin suggestion of Brechtian cynicism.

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Gone now.) Catherine Zeta-Jones is surprisingly lithe and snappy as Velma. Renée Zellweger is puffy and dull as Roxie, straining to get on top of her role and her song-and-dance routines but not making it. As Flynn, Richard Gere also never really takes over. A game try, though, especially in his dance numbers.

Marshall also did the choreography, or most of it, which relates him distantly to the much more gifted Bob Fosse, who did both direction and dances for his 1975 production. The most striking aspect of this film is the lighting by Jules Fisher and others, which manages to maintain a theatrical feeling even in the non-theater moments. The life-and-cabaret fusion relies heavily on that lighting.

But the net effect of the incessant dazzle is depressing. Not merely because the Kander-Ebb score is less than overwhelming or because the erstwhile frank material is now dim or because most of the lead performances are weak. *Chicago* is being hailed by many as a disclosure, a harbinger of more glitz to come: the return of the Hollywood musical. The basic purpose of the old Hollywood musical, the extravaganza à la Busby Berkeley, was not escape, a brief holiday in another life, but utter anesthesia. Everything in those films was so deliberately exaggerated—dozens of pianos in one shot, enormous gleaming floors, hordes of young men and women moving in gymkhana simultaneity with fixed smiles on their faces—that we weren't just taken out of our lives but out of anything like reality. The Hollywood musical world negates reason more thoroughly than any other genre. After two hours of *Chicago*, it was hard to focus on the headlines of the newspapers on the stand outside the theater. Are we really to expect more of these anesthetics? I had thought that nitty-gritty was the passion of our time. Has the nitty become too gritty? Now that I can read those headlines again, this seems possible. Musicals may be an out. ■

Robert Brustein on Theater

Fronting

REVISITING CAPE TOWN after the interval of a year, I was struck anew by the proliferation of dilapidated shanties on the way to and from the airport—visible evidence that President Thabo Mbeki's government has been building South Africa's financial credibility at the expense of the poor (and at the expense of an effective AIDS program for the millions who are infected). Like the wealthy in the United States, South Africa's black corporate elite are receiving special privileges that have not yet trickled down to the hungry and the sick. Mbeki's "black empowerment" policies have brought real opportunities to a number of smart black executives sometimes partnering in white businesses, sometimes fronting for them. (Fronting is a stratagem used by some South African firms in order to dodge government demands for affirmative action.) But his policies seem to be having a more visible impact on the culture than on the economy. In past years, black and "colored" (mixed-race) performing artists could usually be seen enacting Western works under white auspices—the plays of Fugard, the Maynardville Shakespeare Festival, the all-black *La Bohème* set in Soweto produced at the Nico Malan Theater in 2000. This year the balance has tilted. I found more emphasis on African cultural traditions than I did in the past, along with fewer European-style productions.

Granted, the Christmas season is not the best time to get a general sense of a country's theater. Nevertheless, the three dramatic works I saw seemed to share a common native braggadocio. Although primarily designed for tourists, they were first and foremost declarations of racial and ethnic identity. Still, the characters, settings, styles, and themes of the shows were all African, with white collaborators working mostly behind the scenes as writers, directors, composers, choreographers, or technicians.

Ashraf Johaardien's **Salaam Stories**, which I saw at the Amphitheater on the Spier wine estate as part of the Spier-PANSA Festival, is in a sense the purest of the three, owing the least—in fact virtually nothing—to white influences. (Well, the narrative technique may owe something to Story Theater.) A generally good-natured celebration of the Malay way of life, *Salaam Stories* is what Peter Brook would celebrate as "poor theater." I, less charitably, would call it "schmatte theater." The stories are performed in a crude presentational acting style on a bare stage decorated with tattered Persian carpets, shreds of muslin, and a broken fluted column. Dressed in simple costumes (head scarves for the women, fezzes for the men), three female actors and two male actors recite tales of colored life in South Africa. These include accounts of how, three hundred years ago, the Malays were enslaved by the Dutch East India Company and brought to Cape Town from their homes in Bombay, Goa, Bengal, and Sumatra ("They capture my blood, my blood flows from the East").

Despite their diverse origins, all the "Cape Colored" spoke Malay. They also began to speak, and even helped to invent, Afrikaans, a tongue commonly attributed to the Dutch settlers (and commemorated by them in a soaring mountaintop monument to the language on the way to Cape Town from the east). Self-commemoration and ethnic pride also seem to be the generating impulses of *Salaam Stories*, intended to work as instruction for the audience and as therapy for the participants. As the director-designer, Neville Engelbrecht, writes in the program notes, he and the actors achieved a "sense of history, memory, and identity" while rehearsing the show for production.

That identity may have become a little delicate since September 11. One actor speaks of Muslims being targeted and attacked simply because of their religion ("people are scared and the enemy wears my face"). Another hints darkly that perhaps some other ethnic entity might have been responsible for the collapse of the World Trade Center. This supposition does not seem to square with the behavior of still another actor, who, after having built two towers on stage out of blocks, knocks them down abruptly with a flick of her hand.

While the production is largely an expression of Muslim pride, it also has its exotic charms. One love story, in which

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Farouk comes to regard the farts of his girlfriend Fatima as a "great breakthrough in our relationship," has an engaging comic flavor. And there is another whimsical tale, surprisingly tolerant considering Islam's views on homosexuality, in which the storyteller discovers that his uncle's lady friend is actually a transvestite named Sean.

But the primitiveness of *Salaam Tales* is ultimately a little wearing, and its glorification of Muslim customs eventually grows tiresome. One actor tells us that he now wears a fez not just to pray but "as a symbol of who I am." Another insists that Islam is "an all-embracing way of life" and that "Allah gives, Allah takes, Allah makes no mistakes." Maybe Allah makes no mistakes, but one can hardly say the same of some of his followers. Until the Muslim majority is willing to condemn Islamic jihads that slaughter the innocent in his name, the "*salaam aleikum*"s with which the evening concludes, however gently spoken, will retain a bellicose ring.

District Six, which I saw at the University of Cape Town's Baxter Theater Center, is also about the Cape Coloreds, but it constitutes a much more vigorous and tough-minded evening of theater. First produced in 1968, the show has been continuously re-written and re-directed by David Kramer, who has now honed its edges to a sharpness verging on the slick. The dynamic music was composed by Taliep Petersen—responsible with Kramer for another recent musical about District Six, *The Kat and the Kings*.

The neighborhood that generated these lyrical tributes was an extremely animated area of coloreds, blacks, Jews, and gays at the city's edge that was bulldozed to the ground in the 1960s. The occasion was the Group Areas Act of 1960, an atrocious piece of apartheid legislation responsible for removing 3.5 million non-whites to areas where they would no longer contaminate the ruling elite. Those in District Six were taken from their homes and deposited on the Cape Flats near the airport, a displacement similar to the way the United States relocated black slaves and Native Americans, the Australians uprooted aborigines, and the Germans removed Jews, either by means of expatriation or extermination. Most of the area remains bare and uninhabited to this day, except for a few forlorn buildings and a museum dedicated to the time when District Six was a thriving interracial community. Now the district is mostly an occasion for musicals vibrating with regret and nostalgia—regret for a past era, nostalgia for a past style.

Whereas *The Kat and the Kings* looks longingly toward a genre of 1950s rock shows such as *Grease*, *District Six* is more in the style of *Rent*, sharing its use of a polyglot ethnic neighborhood as a setting. Both shows also feature a heterosexual love story and a gay subplot, the rousing numbers over-amplified through head mikes that make the actors look like telephone operators. But what saves *District Six* from being just another musical commodity is a wonderful chorus of "skollies" (colored mobsters) led by the incomparable Jody Abrahams playing a partly menacing, partly huggable gangster named Nines. This Brechtian ménage gives the show most of its color and vigor. The production also features a splendid performance from Yshamano Sebe as a blind black beggar who doubles as a kind of ghetto Tiresias prophesying doom.

The actual fate of District Six, illustrated on stage by the collapse of a few pillars and a palm tree, makes Kramer's love plot look a little irrelevant. In the midst of all this demolition, who cares whether the hero marries the local colored girl or the Jewish girl from London? And while the flamboyantly gay bistro owner gets the chance to model a number of flouncy gowns, we have seen female impersonation done better by Harvey Fierstein, not to mention South Africa's own Pieter-Dirk Uys. Yet it is nonetheless refreshing to see a musical with some stronger social motive than the entertainment of corporate clients on Broadway.

The third show I saw (at Artscape, formerly the whites-only Nico Malan) is the one most destined for commercial success: Richard Loring's **African Footprints**. Staged against a huge logo of Africa styled like the bottom of a foot, this powerhouse of song, dance, and narrative performed by thirty brilliantly trained dancers from a variety of black townships (the cast also includes a scattering of whites and coloreds) could probably play for five years at the Winter Garden. That *African Footprints* has not yet been seen in New York is an accident of history: its American tour had to bypass the city as a result of September 11.

Presented as "a cultural and historical impression of Africa's past, present, and future," the show has been accused of being "curio art" that plays into overseas notions of Africanness. It is true that *African Footprints* does sometimes remind one of those little mahogany elephants for sale in the outdoor markets. But it also deserves praise as a product of genuine multiculturalism, with an English creator-director (Loring), a white choreographer and a black choreographer (Debbie Rukusin and David Matamela), a white composer (Dave Pollecut), a black author responsible for the "poetry" (Don Mattera), and a wholly white design team.

This collaboration suggests that South Africa currently enjoys very relaxed interracial relationships in the arts community. But the mixture makes the show look a little inauthentic. To watch a group of tribally dressed Zulus and Xhosas chanting, "Our footprints shaped the landscape, tamed the buffalo. We rode the wind, silenced the hurricane. Look at us, we have been here before," or to witness a sinuous, squealing, and athletic dancer announcing, "I am Africa" as complicated laser beams pierce the stage smoke is to wonder whether you are in Africa or an American theme park. And it does not help when a scantily clad blonde reminiscent of Fay Wray in *King Kong* sashays onstage to play white goddess to the stomping natives.

Indeed, the most annoying thing about the show is its nativism. You can learn more about South African tribal customs just by reading the first ten pages of Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom* than in a whole evening of *African Footprints*. The dancers look more than a little uncomfortable costumed as fierce warriors in headdresses and tooth necklaces and carrying spears and shields. And they don't seem happy intoning heavy rhetoric like "I am the Quest—my spirit moved the chanting tribes" or "We were in Egypt, making love to Nefertiti" (a difficult task when wearing head mikes).

After the portentous "poetry" takes a brief rest, the performers break into a thrilling stick dance, accompanied by wild handsprings and tom-toms. Not only does this provide the evening with a pulse, it indicates that we are in the hands of extremely accomplished professionals. Indeed, *African Footprints* becomes even more confident after we leave tribal Africa in a sudden historical leap and enter Sofiatown, a vibrant black township. The set consists of shanties; the costumes include red caps, striped shirts, and two-tone shoes; the musicians trade their tom-toms for a bass, a snare drum, a tenor sax, and guitars; and the basic dance step evolves into tap.

"Sofiatown Tap," performed with tin cans that are twirled, thrown, and juggled, may be the highlight of the production. And while it could also be criticized as a display of happy black people demonstrating a sense of rhythm, the number does suggest how music and dance may have been among the few consolations of a truly oppressive existence. Certainly when Ronell Kater and Thuli Mdlalose engage

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in a stirring blues duet ("We know what it is to be women") regarding an imprisoned man they both love, the show rises above its showbiz origins to become a paean to hope.

Another showstopper is "Dueling Footprints," during which two teams, one dressed in white, the other in red, compete over who can perform the best physical stunts, those wearing shoes or those wearing boots. It comes off like a duel of cultures between, say, the tap-dancing of Bill "Bojangles" Robinson and the modern dance of Alvin Ailey, and it gets the audience's hearts pumping. Finally, dressed in the colors of competing soccer teams, the whole cast starts running in place, chanting, "Look at us, we are the future." The evening ends on the same note of chauvinism with which it began, as the company sings, "We are proud to call Africa home—and we're proud and we're home—we are African children."

That repetition of the name of the continent reminded me of how actors in the Yiddish theater used to gain favor with the audience through the number of times they could utter the word "Jew." But if *African Footprints* does not exactly fulfill its promise to "build together our promised land," it is often a stirring expression of African pride, brilliantly choreographed and performed, and destined to make a lot of money for someone once it reaches our shores.

African Footprints and *District Six* are still, I suppose, a form of "fronting," insofar as whites are involved with, and may even continue to control, the means of production, regardless of the ethnic and racial focus. The African American playwright August Wilson would no doubt call this practice "cultural imperialism," and he would be partly right. But these collaborations also suggest the kind of racial brotherhood and trust that are growing in South Africa—a development that not only is heartening in itself but could also hold a lesson or two for our own separatist culture. ■

Off the Menu

By CLIFFORD GEERTZ

Creative Destruction: How Globalization Is Changing the World's Cultures by Tyler Cowen

(Princeton University Press, 192 pp., $27.95)

APOLOGETICS—THE argumentative defense of how matters play out in the world, the formal and systematic vindication of the received design of things—used to be a theological specialty, most particularly a Christian one. The demonstration that, despite appearances to the contrary on almost every hand, our universe is rationally put together, and is good, and that our place within it, if only we would realize it, is blessed: this was the central task of "the science of things divine" from the councils of Nicaea onward. Its success, given the magnitude of the task and the thinness of the evidence, was at best equivocal. Malt, as Housman said, can do more than Milton to justify God's ways to man. But aside from some abstruse philosophizing—Hegel and all that—it was the only game in town.

With the advent of modernity and the decline of other-worldly explanations for this-worldly phenomena, the task of reconciling us to the ordained and the inevitable by demonstrating that what looks like shadow is, when rightly seen, actually light, has fallen into other hands—most notably, this being the age of reckoning, to economics. If you want to argue that some feature of contemporary life that seems unfortunate on its face—income inequality, power imbalances, sweatshops, the terms of trade, the sexual division of labor, spare-the-rich taxation—is both unavoidable and, in the long run, progressive, bracing, and self-correcting, things as they must and should be, then economics, especially neo-liberal economics, is the talk to talk.

Nor is this the case only for the matters of truck, barter, and exchange toward which such talk has been traditionally directed. Economicist theodicy is now employed across the entire spectrum of social life. There is the law-and-economics movement, which extends the rhetoric of utility calculation, cost-benefit analysis, trade-offs, and the bottom line into realms once reserved to prescript, right, principle, and judgment. In sociology, what once was heritage, status, knowledge, or power is now "human capital" or "social capital," accumulated, hoarded, appropriated, or spent. The family is a firm, internalizing costs and manufacturing trust, children, and other durable goods; and marriage is an investment decision. Political science turns away from the solemn abstractions of prescriptive theory to the hard-hat numerical data of revealed preferences, rational choice, Nash equilibria, dominant strategies, and payoff matrices. Even literary critics talk of textual economies; even philosophers talk of transaction costs.

IT WAS ONLY a matter of time before this sort of technically reinforced affirmation of life as it presents itself, thorns, flaws, corruptions, and all, was applied to "culture," and especially to "the arts." The literature of dismay in the arts—that the arts are being commodified, commercialized, homogenized, dumbed down, and generally debased by the imperatives of market capitalism—is by now, a century and a half after Ruskin launched it, both very large and very aggressive. The drawing of virtually all varieties of artistic expression into the scramble and blur of media technology, the commercial "appropriation" of "subaltern" productions by "hegemonic" powers, and, most especially, the American domination of world taste have all been offered as evidence of a precipitous decline in the depth and the quality of contemporary culture.

On the left, the disruptive impact of globalization on weak and undeveloped economies is seen as matched by its subsidization of cultural imperialism, transnational plagiarism, and the throwaway world. On the right, moral relativism and the decline of standards, due mainly to the youth culture and on intellectual loss of nerve, has us all "slouching towards Gomorrah," hellbent on excess and entropy. Rap, Hollywood, Mapplethorpe, blockbuster fiction, poetry slams, the touristification of folk art: the way we express ourselves now is a rich field for anyone looking for opportunities to defend the indefensible and to make the real look right.

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TYLER COWEN IS clearly such a person. A professor at George Mason University of economics and of something called "the study of public choice," as well as the director of the James M. Buchanan Center for Political Economy and the Mercatus Center there ("the premier university source for market-based ideas"), he is the author of a number of excited polemics attacking what he calls "cultural pessimism": *In Praise of Commercial Culture* (1998), "Is Our Culture in Decline?" (1999), *What Price Fame?* (2000). Cowen maintains an ideologized website on ethnic restaurants in the Washington, D.C. area. ("Restaurants manifest the spirit of capitalist multiculturalism," he believes. "Entrepreneurship, international trade, and cultural exchange all come together in these communal eateries.") And he has now come forth with a full-throated defense of market exchange—free, expanding, catholic, and cosmopolitan—as an improving force in "the creative industries": music, literature, cinema, cuisine, and the visual arts.

Globalized culture, Cowen asserts, far from representing the triumph of consumerism or the debasement of taste, is, as Schumpeter said of capitalist production generally, "a gale of creative destruction," blowing away the obsolete and the outworn to make room for the robust, the novel, the various, and the re-fashioned:

> A typical American yuppie drinks French wine, listens to Beethoven on a Japanese audio system, uses the Internet to buy Persian textiles from a dealer in London, watches Hollywood movies funded by foreign capital and filmed by a European director, and vacations in Bali; an upper-middle-class Japanese may do much the same. A teenager in Bangkok may see Hollywood movies starring Arnold Schwarzenegger (an Austrian), study Japanese, and listen to new pop music from Hong Kong and China, in addition to the Latino singer Ricky Martin. Iraq's Saddam Hussein selected Frank Sinatra's "My Way" as the theme song for his fifty-fourth birthday.

It's a wild, wonderful, disorderly world; mélange and creativity technologically enhanced.

Cowen's argument is that what looks to the anti-market mind like kitsch, humbug, pretension, or decadence is in fact vital and innovative, the cutting edge of world creativity. His main tack in arguing this case is to apply to such phenomena the same frame of judgment that he applies to his ethnic restaurants. What is important is not whether they meet some arbitrary standard of imagined quality, but whether they significantly increase the range of choice. It is only the magnitude of the menu that matters, only the variety of goods on offer:

> Most critics of contemporary culture ... use diversity as a code word for a ... particularist agenda, often of an anti-commercial or anti-American nature. They care more about the particular form that diversity takes in their favored culture, rather than about diversity more generally, freedom of choice, or a broad menu of quality options. In response ... I [take] a more optimistic and more cosmopolitan view of cross-cultural exchange. The "creative destruction" of the market is ... *artistic* in the most literal sense. It creates a plethora of innovative and high-quality creations in many different genres, styles, and media ... cross-cultural exchange expands the menu of choice, at least [if] trade and markets are allowed to flourish.

Availability is all, and it is clear that "trade between cultures" adds all sorts of things to what there is to be bought and consumed: Inuit carvings, Jamaican Dub, Caucasian carpets, kung fu cinema, Naipaul and Mahfouz, Chaplin and Buñuel, the Beatles, *Star Trek*, and Wolfgang Puck, not to speak of foie gras and mee krob.

The net effect, in Cowen's happy opinion, is to make us all aesthetically richer—in general, on balance, globally speaking. "An individual can be a fan of Madonna and television soap operas while contributing to the ethos behind rave music and cyberpunk." "The number of artisans in Mexico is now at an all time high." Gandhi notwithstanding, competition from Manchester textiles did not undermine Indian homespun, "it spurred improvements in its quality ... as handweavers focused their attention on finer grades of production and design." Even the English language "has more words than ever before," a clear sign of progress. And it is an ill wind that blows nobody good: "if [it were] not for maritime trade, including the lucrative slave trade," the Cape Verde Islands would never have been settled and the unique synthetic music—Portuguese, African, and Brazilian—produced there today would not have been created.

The Leibnizian quality of all this, Pangloss in the marketplace, is not lost on Cowen. Indeed, the bulk of his book, a stream of small examples and large pronouncements sewn together by insistence and reiteration, is devoted to showing that although there is naturally a downside to everything, there is no reason to worry. Whatever negative effects commerce may have on culture, they are limited and transient, the simple and necessary costs of progress. For the neoliberal apologist, as for the Christian one, the real test comes in dispelling doubt as to the worth, on net, of the merely actual.

CONSIDER THE CASE of cinema, because of its capital-intensive and mogul-centered nature "one of the hard cases for globalization," to which Cowen devotes his only somewhat sustained discussion, in a chapter titled "Why Hollywood Rules the World, and Whether We Should Care." (The book has a kidding-on-the-level epigraph from a former chairman of the Australian Film Commission, apparently a fellow believer: "A country that makes a film like *Star Wars* deserves to rule the world.") The "clustering" side of this problem, why the industry is so strongly centered in southern California, poses no particular problem. It is readily accounted for by the usual considerations of location theory: an enormous domestic market, the external economies of geographical concentration, the snowball effects of early success, and the like. One can explain Broadway, Lorenzo's Florence, or Periclean Athens in the same sort of way. But the global, "imperializing" side of the question, why the dream factory's export prowess is so much stronger than anybody else's—why world taste runs to *Die Hard*, *Titanic*, Mickey Mouse, and *Jurassic Park* rather than to Bergman, Godard, Kurosawa, and Ray—presents rather more of a problem.

"Hollywood movies have become so publicly visible as to occasion charges of American cultural imperialism," Cowen observes in wonder—especially from Europeans, especially from the French. More than eighty percent of box office revenues in continental Europe goes to American films. The typical European film has about one percent of the audience of the typical Hollywood film. Even the United Kingdom, with the advantage of English, "has never seriously rivaled Hollywood as a movie-making power." And since Hong Kong, "arguably the world's most ... imaginative cinema" in the 1970s and 1980s, has been returned to Chinese control and much of its creative talent has moved to Hollywood, the United States, for a while out-competed there, has again captured more than half the local box office. Why does America so dominate world cinema markets? By virtue of its monopoly power? Its dumping capacities? Its devotion to lowest-common-denominator production values, to slaughter and slap-

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stick? "There is," Cowen says gravely, "no simple answer to this question." But he gives one, anyway: "no."

IN THE FIRST place, though the United States is a large producer of movies, it is not the largest. India, with upwards of eight hundred films per year to our two hundred fifty, is the largest producer, and "in a typical year the Western European nations make more movies than America does." Second, American domination of other peoples' markets is quite recent. In 1936, the six most popular French films were all native products, and of the seventy-five most popular films there, fifty-six were French. In those same years, domestic cinema "blossomed in Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway, and Mexico"; even the Argentines "held their own against Hollywood imports." And third, Hollywood has so deeply penetrated world markets not because domestic consumption subsidizes its foreign pricing or because its production costs are artificially low (they are, of course, high, and rising), but because it gives the international audience what it wants: "The American values of heroism, individualism, and romantic self-fulfillment are well suited for the large screen and for global audiences." We have, in this country, adopted "that which can be globally sold" as part of our national culture, have decided to emphasize our international triumphs and our ethnic diversity in our national self-image. In something of a Faustian bargain, we have "traded away the particularistic strands of [our] culture for success in global markets." Indiana Jones travels better than Tennessee Williams. Bogart, John Wayne, Jerry Lewis, Madonna: the world devours American self-caricature.

Cowen has other arguments, one tacked on to the next like disjunctive "moreover" clauses in a lawyer's brief. State subsidies, on average seventy percent of a film's funding, bureaucratize production and weaken the capacity of European cinema to compete. The American film industry responded more quickly and more intelligently to the coming of television. (In the United States, "theatrical revenue ... drives both video revenue and television revenue.... In Europe, in contrast, television revenue is more likely to be a *substitute* for theatrical revenue.") American film schools are like business schools, trained on profit, efficiency, and technical innovation, but European film schools "have become more like humanities programs, emphasizing semiotics, critical theory, and contemporary left-wing philosophies." European directors are older. Hollywood, where many of the leading directors are non-American by birth and most of the major studios are now foreign-owned, is a highly cosmopolitan, globalized place to start with.

Anyway, Cowen adds in his worryless way, the dominance of American trash is good for diversity. Shut out of world markets, European movie-makers have been set free, rather like those Indian handweavers, "to focus on nuances of language and culture," thus expanding the overall range of choice. And besides, plagued by rising costs in advertising, special effects, and celebrity salaries, Hollywood's market position is far from invulnerable: "Witness the history of the once dominant American auto industry."

And so it goes. The same strategy—raise all the objections in parodic form and then shoot them down with quips and instances—is pursued throughout Cowen's book. Does industrial technology stifle creativity? The steel bands of Trinidad reached their peak when the indigenous percussion technology of bamboo was abandoned in favor of fifty-gallon oil drums providentially discarded by the multinational oil companies, allowing "the basic ideas of the xylophone orchestra" to be applied to the properties of metal to produce a sound "that is more shimmering and susceptible to greater variations in pitch and attack";

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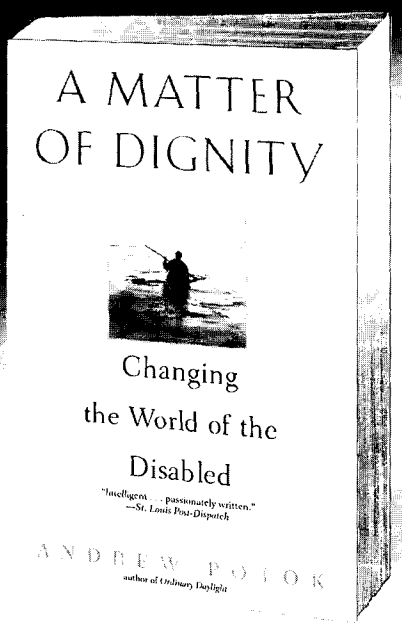

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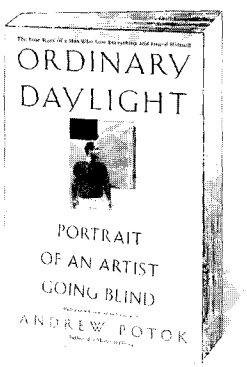

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and anyway, they last longer. Did pre-spun and pre-dyed yarns, obtained by dismantling industrially manufactured cloth, cheapen Navajo rug design? The garish, convoluted Eyedazzlers, "considered corruptions by some critics at the time," have risen greatly in esteem and value as they have been marketed "to distant American consumers, rather than local trading partners." Does mass marketing destroy traditional creativity? While "we cannot understand freedom without tragedy," including the loss by non-Western cultures of their force and personality, this is offset globally by "The Minerva ('the owl flies at dusk') Model." It is often precisely when a particular culture is starting to decline—the Hawaiians in the nineteenth century, the Canadian Indians after the coming of the fur trade, the post-conquest Mexicans—that it blossoms and enriches the world with ukuleles, totem poles, and Moorish serapes. The Minerva Model implies that it is worthwhile to "cash in" the potential creativity embedded in a culture. "By accepting the eventual decline of a culture," Cowen writes, "we are also mobilizing its creative forces, at least for a while."

THERE IS LITERALLY no end to this sort of thing. Homogenization is re-described as "universalization," which is "a word with more positive connotations." "Channel surfing" is turned into "quality monitoring." The reduction of "the number of truly distinct societies," through trademarks, franchising, and standardization, "may help cultures understand each other," and so avoid ethnic conflict and the clash of civilizations. But after a while the same form of argument endlessly repeated with a new factoid plugged in begins to pall, and one starts to wonder whether the restaurant menu is really such a good metaphor for cultural richness after all. Two from column A and three from column B expands choice all right, at least so long as you are content with the columns and you have the price. What it does not do is give you much in the way of guidance as to whether the game is worth the candle in the first place, whether what is on offer comes to much.

Like restaurant food and life in general, what art most needs is not apology but critique; and critique—and the standards to guide it—is precisely what the narrowed language of economics is unable to provide. It is not that Cowen is without aesthetic views, which he calls, uneasily, as though he had no right to them, "value judgments." It is that he makes no attempt to justify any of them beyond the sheer fact that he happens to hold them. If you disagree, fine: *de gustibus*, to each his own, it takes all kinds (except perhaps "pessimists") to make a world.

Cowen says, *en passant*, that "the serialist music of Pierre Boulez" provides him with great joy, that Andy Warhol's "Last Supper" paintings "are masterpieces in their own right," that Salman Rushdie and Pramoedya Toer "are world class writers, comparable to the best of Europe and the United States, if not better," and that if he were going to be stranded in a foreign country he would take along Spenser to while away the evenings because his writings "merit multiple careful readings." But he does not say anything about the works involved or why he is drawn to them, or what sort of principles might hold such variousness together. Not a line of poetry, not a passage of prose, to say nothing of a musical phrase or a painting detail, is excerpted and analyzed, or even referred to, in his entire book. What Boulez is all about, wherein Warhol's genius lies, who the American writers Pramoedya surpasses are, or what he makes of *The Faerie Queen* remains mysterious. Even the cinema, where his attention is less wandering, and his competence probably greater, receives only generalized, indeterminate praise: John Woo is "energetic," *The Blair Witch Project* is "innovative," *Jaws* is "exciting."

TO HAVE CRITIQUE, of course, you must have critics. But Cowen is so bent on justifying globalization as such, and on forestalling any sort of governmental resistance to it, that he has quite forgotten—if he ever knew—what criticism is in the arts. He sees it not as the close examination and the intense response to particular works, styles, or traditions, the setting forth of reasons, beyond "a lot of people like it," why this is valuable or that vacant, and the drawing of others into the force fields of the deep, the original, the serious, and the powerful. He sees it, simply and wholly, as an ideological matter: either you are for free markets everywhere and always, or you are not. "Critics"—a term apparently interchangeable with "pessimists," "elitists," and "anti-Americans"—are just so many naysayers.

"Influenced by Marxian economics and Continental philosophy," critics, in Cowen's view of them, are like the twelve thousand arts bureaucrats defending France against Disney and Coca-Cola, consecrated to spreading "skepticism about market-driven culture." Whether they are "structuralists," "post-modernists," adherents of "The Frankfurt School," or "Canadians" ("Margaret Atwood coined the phrase 'the Great Star Spangled Them' to express her opposition to NAFTA"), they are determined to save us from what is seen as "a bloodless economics of profit." About the legion of practical critics, writing here, there, and everywhere about particular movies, paintings, books, dance, and music, we hear nothing at all. Edmund Wilson and Pauline Kael, Leonard Feather and Clement Greenberg might as well never have lived, and there is apparently nothing in scholarly commentary, Vendler or Varnedoe, Barthes or Bazin, worth anyone's attention.

If we are to come to any conclusions about "how globalization is changing the world's cultures," other than the simple fact that it is indeed changing it and profoundly, we need a language of perception and sensibility capable of sorting it out and guiding us through it. It is not clear that economics can produce that. What it seems likely to produce, on the evidence before us, is the higher complacency, and a great many all-for-the-best accounts of loss and upheaval. ■

The Box

If it can stay
at its post,
cross-braced
between
the world
and the
weather
this one
will see
me out:
behold
its dark
scoured
innards,
fragrant
with tea
and rust,
its drum-tight
blown-egg feel, the cone
of air before it, wired and tense
as a lover by a telephone. Bert
Kwakkel, my Dutch
luthier, emptied
so much wood out of the wood
it takes no more than a dropped shoe
or a cleared throat on the hall landing
to set its little blue moan off again.
I port it to its stand. I let it
still. I contemplate it
like a skull.

Don Paterson

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Up From Hippocrates

By SHERWIN B. NULAND

Blood and Guts: A Short History of Medicine by Roy Porter

(W.W. Norton, 199 pp., $21.95)

I.

IN 1997, I wrote a blurb for *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind*, the book of Roy Porter's approximately seventy-volume output that is most likely to remain widely popular among general readers. Though I called it a "perfectly magnificent intellectual history of medicine," filled with "wisdom, insight," and a "plenitude of information," the book (and my blurb) enraged one of my most admired friends. The friend, Ion Gresser, was for many years a senior researcher at L'Institut de Recherches Scientifiques sur le Cancer, in Paris. He is the scientist who discovered the anti-cancer effects of interferon in 1969, having in 1961 been the first investigator to demonstrate that the drug is toxic to cells. While interferon has never lived up to the high expectations of many physicians and patients, it continues to be the subject of hopeful research, and it has found significant, if limited, clinical application.

Irately calling Porter's depiction of interferon's history "a masterpiece of errors," Gresser asserted that Porter had exaggerated the degree to which the drug was initially touted as a "wonder treatment"; and that he had confused certain dates in the sequence of the research in such a way as to magnify the purported effect of such claims; and that he had unjustifiably accused some of the drug's researchers of willingly becoming part of a "personality cult," epitomized by their appearance on a *Newsweek* cover; and, perhaps most egregious of all, that he had erroneously stated that "the interferon hullabaloo saved no cancer sufferers." All of this in a single paragraph in a book of 829 pages.

Gresser's criticisms were warranted. Indeed, whatever touting there may have been of interferon came far more from the media than from its investigators; and Porter's dates are indeed mistaken by a wide margin; and the *Newsweek* cover does not exist (Porter seems to have been referring to articles in two issues of *Time*, neither with a cover photo of scientists); and interferon has been proved to be of use in certain malignant diseases, most particularly chronic myeloid leukemia. But I suspect that the real cause of Gresser's fury lay less in the relatively harmless (except to his equanimity) errors of fact than in certain accusations of a more editorializing nature. For one of the attractions of Porter's writing is an adamant refusal to hide his opinions, no matter how controversial. Gresser, the most dedicated of researchers, was offended for himself and his colleagues by the use of such exaggerated terms as "endless hype," "lure of gigantic profits," and "contamination of the whole field by big money." In fact, other biomedical scientists depicted in Porter's important book fared even worse than he did. In Porter's very next paragraph, Steven Rosenberg of the National Cancer Institute is described as epitomizing "the modern era of glitzy research and its prima donnas" and as an "egotistical cancer mogul" who is the product of "science when it operates through careerist entrepreneurship and a macho star system." Few readers familiar with Rosenberg's work or his personality would subscribe to such characterizations.

The two final lacerating sentences of Gresser's epistolary denunciation were directed as much at me as at Porter. "I am sending a copy [of the letter] ... to my friend Sherwin Nuland who waxed lyrical in his review [sic]. Possibly you were more accurate in your discussion of surgery." The fact is that Porter's pages on surgery were indeed more accurate, but that does not mean that he did not make a series of small historical errors, or that he did not obtrude a few powerful and singular editorial judgments into his text. Why, then, did I choose to recommend *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind* in such generous terms? And why did the other two blurbists—learned and honest men, both of them—do the same? Simon Schama called the book "astonishingly encyclopedic," and wrote of Porter's erudition that it was "invigorating" and of his perceptiveness that it was "as usual, scalpel-sharp," while Oliver Sacks pointed out the author's "enormous knowledge."

I cannot presume to speak for either Schama or Sacks, but the motives behind my own recommendation are easily recalled. They are to be found in other terms that appear in our respective blurbs. Schama: "compulsively readable"; Nuland: "unique artistry," "inimitable perspective," "the sheer joy of hearing the distinctive voice of one of today's most fascinating commentators"; and, most to the point, Sacks: "delightful style and a highly idiosyncratic point of view," and "alive and fascinating and provocative on every page."

It is in these comments that the reasons become clear why so many historians and ordinary people have for the past two decades looked forward with anticipation to the publication of any new book by Porter. Whether written for the general reader or for the specialist, each of them really has been "idiosyncratic," "alive and fascinating and provocative," "inimitable," and filled with "sheer joy"—much like the man himself.

ROY PORTER DIED less than a year ago, on March 3, 2002, of a heart attack sustained while bicycling to his vegetable garden in St. Leonard's-on-the-Sea, England. Only three years earlier, at age fifty-two, he had told an interviewer that he would like his life to end while he was at work gardening. He came far closer to getting his wish than most of us ever will, but much too early.

I met Porter only once, in London, when we were two-thirds of a three-man BBC discussion loosely centered around a book I was flogging. Long familiar with his work and having heard a few stories of his colorful personality, I was keen to see him in the flesh. He did not disappoint. He arrived in a denim jacket covering a tight black silk shirt with its top unbuttoned sufficiently to reveal gold chains. He wore cowboy boots, rumpled trousers, and an un-historian-like earring. His tousled hair matched several days' growth of beard, and he gave the appearance of having arrived on a motorcycle (though it was more likely a bicycle) at the last possible moment. Add to this an easy smile and a pair of twinkly and somewhat mischievous brown eyes, and you have the image of Porter that had become a minor legend among his fellow medical historians. I liked him immediately.

He was as quick and clever as I had been told to expect, and he charmed everyone in the studio with his good nature just as

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he flabbergasted and delighted me with the wide range of his knowledge in a multitude of areas. Accustomed to a certain ponderous aridity among my academic historian colleagues—especially when they find themselves in front of a microphone—I reveled in his lighthearted and quite effortless responses to our host's attempts to impart a solemn tone to our discussion. The overall impression was of a man unhindered by the ordinary conventions of his surroundings. I was not surprised to discover, reading his obituary last year, that he had been married and divorced four times. I was also not surprised to learn that he had received a double first in history at Cambridge and gone on to become dean at that university's Churchill College before joining the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine in 1979.

An unconventional man writes unconventional books. If their subject is the past, he will not bind himself within the rules of ordinary historiography. In the hands, or the pen, of a lesser man than Porter, the results of such an unconventionality can be disastrous, and it must be admitted that even for him the method was sometimes less than wholly satisfactory—witness the Gresser criticism. But the errors of detail that have sometimes been found in Porter's books have more to do with his speed of output than with his idiosyncratic approach to the narrative of history. In the words of a recent obituary written by one of his colleagues at the Wellcome Institute, "he knew perfectly well that the time he had given himself for some of his productions was simply not enough ... and that it showed." Ideas tumbled out of Porter like wonders from some scholarly horn of plenty, and he—no less than his colleagues and his readers—could barely keep up with them. He would joke that he was forced to be so productive because he was being chased by his debts, but by far the greater factor was that he was racing to keep up with his outpouring of thought.

As wide as Porter's encyclopedic knowledge of facts was his grasp of the greater lessons and principles that are taught by the analysis of the cavalcade of events and personalities with which he had made himself so familiar. In the highly professionalized arena of medical historiography, where there are so many hedgehogs and almost no foxes, he was both fox and hedgehog, a master of the panorama as he was a master of several of its smallest settings. Seen through Porter's eyes, those small settings became epitomes of the whole, and of the distinctive analytical perspective that he brought to the enterprise.

And the errors of fine detail? Few of them were even of the minor import that so exercised Gresser. By and large, they were the sort of mistakes that make a smug reviewer feel still more smug for having caught an intellectual giant mistakenly saying, for example, that the first successful excision of a stomach was to treat an ulcer rather than cancer. In the context of the historical patterns being elucidated, such a lapse is a flyspeck. It changes not an iota of the sweep of Porter's historical vision, nor does it weaken the justification for his conclusions. The loss of Porter is more than the loss of an outstanding historian; it is the loss of one of the few scholars in that field whose voice could be heard and understood by every level of reader. It was a voice—in a discipline of increasing fragmentation into minutenesses of historical study—that spoke to the whole of its subject. And it is the loss, too, of a man whose intimate familiarity with each constituent tree did not distract him from the overarching truth, which is that only by understanding the significance of the forest can we perceive the entire landscape of humankind's strivings.

II.

It is simplicity itself—superficiality, in fact—to say that medicine does not exist in a vacuum; that it is an outgrowth of its time, its place, its practitioners, and the expectations of society. In other words, medicine is inevitably the product—and the expression—of the surrounding culture. And yet, since formal studies of medical history first began their sporadic appearance in the early sixteenth century, they have concerned themselves, until the recent past, almost exclusively with descriptions of the unconquerable ascendance of knowledge, as it was discovered by individual contributors gifted with particular insights about disease and its treatment. Medicine's many failures have rarely been the subject of investigation.

When medical history became a topic of wide interest for practicing physicians around the turn of the twentieth century, these self-taught and somewhat naïve researchers understandably sought to construct the image of a direct and always upward path to the clinical knowledge of their day, though things had not actually happened that way. For some fifty years, the scholars were primarily doctors, untrained and unskilled in the critical methods of the academic discipline of history. When blind alleys were described—the immensely long one, for example, preaching that sickness is caused by an imbalance of four internal humors, or fluids—they were treated as appropriate transitional stages toward scientific understanding. Charlatans, religious obstructionists, and the many misguided theorists either found no place in standard history texts or were treated as though they were aberrations or even figures of fun, and therefore tangential to the uninterrupted progress toward today's ascendancy of science. The so-called "Great Man" view of medical history prevailed, in which far-seeing individuals of high moral principle triumphed over some particular backwardness and took giant steps toward today. The many failures were consigned to oblivion. Medicine's story was presented as a saga of unrelieved triumphalism, almost always told by the proud heirs to the grand tradition.

For more than half a century after its publication in 1913, the very bible for physicians seeking an acquaintance with the details of the medical past and the biographies of its contributors was one or another of the four successive editions of a book titled *An Introduction to the History of Medicine*, written by Fielding Garrison, a librarian who had received an M.D. degree by attending evening classes at Georgetown University. Garrison never practiced the clinical art. He devoted his career to bibliography, the cataloguing of medical information, and his historical studies. The following sentence appears in the preface to the first edition of his magnum opus: "The history of medicine is, in fact, the history of humanity itself, with its ups and downs, its brave aspirations after truth and finality, its pathetic failures." But in spite of that ringing declaration, the book itself is an unrelieved collection of the thumbnail biographies of high achievers. Though filled with entertaining and personalized comments on careers and contributions, Garrison's thick volume ignores the many blind alleys and disappointments. Certainly it contains precious little of "the history of humanity itself," and none of the failures.

That enlightening perspective had to await the arrival of the social historians who entered the field in significant numbers some thirty-five years ago. Few of those social historians had scientific training or were physicians, and those who possessed the M.D. degree did not practice. They were, and are, full-time academic researchers into the social conditions in which medicine and biomedical science exist. They have been more interested in public health and the perspectives of patients, as well as minorities of all sorts,

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than in the Great Men and the Great Discoveries. Highly trained in the methods of historical research and writing, social historians have made major contributions to the understanding of the relationships between disease, class, gender, ethnicity, economics, power, and the organized growth of the science establishment. They have transformed the study of their specialty, and indeed made of it "the history of humanity itself."

But something has been lost in the process, and it is not only the rosy viewpoint of the old-fashioned doctor-historians whose interest arose from their self-image of being part of a grand tradition of achievement and character, and from an identification with the best of their predecessors. The social historians know little and write less of clinical medicine and bench science, of the biology of the diseases against which physicians have struggled since Hippocratic times and before. Their views of the relationships between the various aspects of medicine's historical background are in their own way as distorted as were those of the earlier generations who neglected social factors. As much as twenty-three years ago, Leonard Wilson, a historian who was the editor of one of the two leading periodicals in the field, *The Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, called attention to the growing problem in an editorial titled "Medical History Without Medicine." A few months later, at the next national meeting of the American Association for the History of Medicine, he found himself under a storm of critical fire for pointing out what had become obvious to the dwindling number of clinicians in attendance. But a few social historians understood what Wilson meant, and knew that the criticism was valid.

One of them was Roy Porter. *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind* was a major installment of Porter's antidote to the creeping malady that had invaded the organs of medical historiography, and also to that other endemic disease of academic historians of all stripes: superspecialization. Though the book's viewpoint was that of the social historian (its subtitle was *A Medical History of Humanity*), it was written by an author of such magisterial authority on the details of clinical discovery, biography, practice, its supporting science, and the processes of disease that its appearance was hailed by the entire range of historians, from expert to dabbler. And the book's "delightful style and ... highly idiosyncratic point of view" combined themselves in the "unique artistry" that made it "compulsively readable." It was pure Porter.

III.

All of this is by way of a very long preamble to discussing the book that is the last we will have from Roy Porter, *Blood and Guts: A Short History of Medicine*. It is specifically because Porter's voice is such a unique one that I have chosen to present all the foregoing background material before moving on to the real subject of this review. I do not believe that his work can be fully appreciated without some comprehension of the personal and professional context from which it originates. As I read *Blood and Guts*, I also became convinced that its reason for being is utilitarian and pedagogical. Though its cover material calls the book "an eminently readable, entertaining romp through the history of our vain and valiant attempts to heal ourselves," this is verbiage meant only to attract potential purchasers. What Porter has given his readers is, as always, "eminently readable," and "entertaining," but it is hardly a romp except in the sense of its brevity. It is a very serious undertaking, and in some ways it must be considered a précis of *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind*.

The writing of that book was undertaken to solve a problem that every medical historian frequently faces, one best described in Porter's own words: "When my students and people at large have asked me to recommend an up-to-date and readable single volume history of medicine, I have felt at a loss to know what to suggest." His solution was to "have a shot at filling the gap." He did that admirably: *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind* is a plentifully luxurious feast of many filling courses, all to be enjoyed at leisure. But there are readers who need a quick meal, easily digested and so nutritious that its benefits are as lasting as a larger repast; and it helps if the food is delicious. That meal is the present book. It was prepared using ingredients of the lecture courses given by Porter at the Wellcome Institute, now known as the Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine at University College London.

Like a course of lectures, *Blood and Guts* is laid out in sequential sections organized in such a way that the reader knows precisely where he is while perusing every chapter and how its contents pertain to the whole. In essence, Porter has laid out the book by following a guideline set in the first sentence of his epigraph, the famous aphoristic line of Hippocrates: "The art [of medicine] has three factors, the disease, the patient, and the physician." His opening chapter is about diseases, his third is about the patient's body, and all but one of the others is about the methods used by physicians to diagnose and to treat. That one exception is the final chapter, called "Medicine in Modern Society."

Should the brief preceding description of its contents leave any potential reader with the impression that *Blood and Guts* has the tone of a series of lectures, he would be correct. But these lectures are well worth attending. The colorful accounts of individuals and discoveries are alone worth the price of admission, as is the style in which they are presented. Who else but Porter would describe the confused hodgepodge of useless medicinals and other treatments being prescribed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a "gallimauphry"? Not only that, but he uses the charming and esoteric term within a sentence that makes the word's meaning so clear that no recourse to a dictionary is required. And in what other volume on the history of medicine is the word "fuck" to be found? No, these are no ordinary professor's lectures.

Porter's first chapter, "Disease," is written from the perspective that the illnesses characteristic of any historical period are consequent to the conditions under which people lived. Thus, infectious diseases were probably rare during man's early days on earth, since their spread requires a level of population density that did not exist among the small and scattered groups in which hunter-foresters roamed. As more organized and stable communities developed, they did so in direct proportion to their ability to plant the soil and to domesticate animals. Agricultural societies often came to depend on a single grain such as corn or wheat, leading to a constant level of nutritional diseases that were primarily due to deficiencies of vitamins or minerals. But the problems transmitted from farm and home animals were worse: "Pathogens which had once been exclusive to animals became transferred, through long and complex evolutionary processes [within the microbes], to man; animal diseases leapt the species gap and mutated into human ones."

The list of ailments and microscopic invaders that man has acquired from contact with vertebrate animals and the insects that associate with them is long. We share sixty diseases, for example, with our best friend the dog. When those diseases are added that are the product of man's dependency on specific tracts of land and a local water supply, we are presented with a formidable array that includes tuberculosis, smallpox, malaria, influenza, colds,

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salmonellosis, polio, cholera, typhoid, whooping cough, hepatitis, diphtheria, and a wide variety of parasitic ailments.

As populations grew, settlements and then cities became increasingly congested, leading to the rapid spread of diseases from one individual to another, and adding to the burden of inadequate food for the ever-growing and largely malnourished citizenry. Huge epidemics, such as those caused by bubonic plague and smallpox, decimated populations and were spread from one country to another by the beginnings of international trade and exploration. Conquest, too, became an instrument of lethal disease, with syphilis, for example, being spread throughout Europe by the movements of armies and their camp followers after its first appearance on the continent in 1493. The Spanish unleashed wave after wave of measles, influenza, and typhus on an Amerindian population so susceptible that the resultant carnage became a virtual massacre of indigenous peoples. A few centuries later, typhus would become the most feared disease of conquered nations, and of the armies that did the conquering. In the nineteenth century, the international migration of large numbers of indigent people caused a pandemic of cholera, while typhoid killed thousands when water supplies were contaminated.

Industrialization brought prosperity to some, but with it came the occupational ailments of the workers who toiled in the new plants and factories, often laboring and living in squalid conditions that spawned infectious and deficiency diseases throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But prosperity became more generalized some fifty years ago, and this, too, had its own problems. Diseases of affluence are the present plagues, including those due simply to living so long, doing less manual labor, and indulging ourselves and the manufacturers of the foods and other products that we over-consume every day. Thus, we have inflicted obesity and coronary heart disease on ourselves, as well as cancer, hypertension, emphysema, stroke, alcoholism, motor vehicle accidents, addiction, and an array of degenerative diseases such as arthritis, osteoporosis, and Alzheimer's, to name a few. As has been true of our forebears in every era, we men and women of the twenty-first century are victims of the way we live.

Porter devotes a single chapter to the human body and the way in which its workings were gradually discovered. But it is a chapter in which he manages not only to hit the highlights, but to make certain observations about the one principle that lies at the heart of both Western medicine's enormous success and the failures that so many critics have identified. In a single word, the principle might best be called "seeing." Ours is the only one of the world's many systems of healing that depends on reality, on knowing precisely how every part of the body actually functions, in health and in disease. This means that highly specific knowledge of the anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry of organs, tissues, and cells must precede any understanding of the ways in which they go awry and the methods available to treat the abnormalities.

A modern biomedical clinician attempts to "see" in his mind's eye the very details of every disorder that he encounters. The success of his therapies is in direct proportion to the state of the science that has enabled him to perceive what is actually happening within his patient's organs and cells. But to reach the state of achievement that has made this necessary state of affairs possible, Western medicine has had to focus that seeing gaze on tinier and tinier parts of the people who need its help. The ancient Hippocratic doctrine of treating an entire patient has given way to the treatment of misbehaving molecules. The rewards have been magnificent, but the price has been high. Porter sums up the problem in a paragraph, critically placed after his discussion of the origins and the rise of dissection:

> The journey deep into human flesh initiated by dissection is what has made Western medicine unique. It has sustained the fruitful conviction that in ever-more-minute investigation of the flesh lies the key to health and disease, even if that has also encouraged a tendency to myopic reductionism, to miss the whole by concentrating exclusively upon the parts.

The key word, of course, is "exclusively." Porter has no quarrel with biomedicine, only with the exclusive way it is used in the treatment of individuals and populations. Having spent his career studying and documenting its rise, he was aware (as few others were) of the ways in which biomedicine's aims and purposes have gradually become contorted into shapes that would be unrecognizable to the early-twentieth-century researcher-clinicians whose only goal was to permit men and women to live in health for the full expectancy of years that nature has prescribed for our species. Human cloning, genetic engineering for enhancement, cosmetic surgery, the prolongation of life beyond its natural span—these have now fallen into the province of Western medicine, long before the art of healing has solved its far more urgent problems.

And Porter was aware also of the essentially social nature of disease and therefore of the several salients on which it should be confronted. Just as there is a necessary place for biomedicine, there is an equally necessary place for the treatment of the entire individual and the circumstances of his life; just as there is a place for funding laboratory investigation, there is a place for funding research in population studies and public health; just as there is a place for providing medical care to those who are able to pay its high financial costs, there is a place for providing it at the same high level to those who cannot; just as there is a place for bringing the best of medical care to the citizens of nations that can afford the necessary expenditures of money and manpower, there is a place for bringing its benefits to the citizens of nations far less well endowed. And then there is the question that will never go away so long as resources are finite, as they will always be: should wealthy nations continue their very high level of funding for the technological research being done in their universities and institutes when millions of people throughout the world are dying for want of ordinary public health measures and the basics of individual care? "Modern medicine at best possesses unique capacities to keep individuals alive, healthy and free of pain," Porter writes. "Its contribution to the broader health of humankind remains more questionable. Many believe that investment in public health, environmental hygiene and better nutrition would do far more for the health of Third World nations than sophisticated clinical medicine programmes."

These are matters that Porter saves for his final chapter, after he has described the rise of the profession of medicine and the development of its treatment modalities and hospitals. The narrative of current biomedicine's evolution treats the events and the contributors in a rather standard way, in the sense that the significant information is covered in a somewhat perfunctory summary-of-highlights fashion. It is here that the author has more than elsewhere succumbed to the temptations of speed; the Porterian attention to the larger society is virtually absent from these pages.

It is also in these somewhat rushed chapters that Porter falls into most of the small misstatements that dot his book like so many annoying little droppings, errors

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that a historian with his commanding knowledge of facts and sources might easily have avoided had he been less hasty. The caduceus, the traditional emblem of physicians, consists of a single snake entwining the staff of Asklepios, the Greek god of healing, and not "two snakes intertwined, like a double helix," which is, in fact, the staff of Hermes. Hippocratic doctors did not "pledge to do no harm"—the famous injunction appears in no pledge, but rather as an admonition in Book I of the Hippocratic text *Epidemics* (here Porter surprisingly repeats a widely quoted misconception about the famous Hippocratic oath, which does not contain such a pledge). Yale admitted its first female medical student in 1916, not "only after the Second World War." The medical classic produced by the sixteenth-century anatomist Andreas Vesalius was *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*, not *De Fabrica Corporis Humani*. The habit of draping a stethoscope around the neck became a common practice in the final third of the twentieth century, and not within a few decades of the instrument's introduction in 1819. It is generally agreed that the number of autopsies performed by the mid-nineteenth-century pathologist Karl von Rokitansky was approximately thirty thousand, half of Porter's estimate of sixty thousand—a figure that would have required Rokitansky to perform approximately thirteen hundred of these hours-long procedures (an average of more than four a day, six days a week) in each of the forty-eight years of his career, during at least a decade of which he held a series of demanding administrative posts, including dean of the medical school and then chancellor of the University of Vienna. Ether is a far safer anesthetic agent than chloroform, despite Porter's statement to the contrary; the heart chamber from which blood passes through the mitral valve to enter the left ventricle is the left atrium, not the auricle; the term "blue-baby syndrome" is not synonymous with congenital heart disease—and there are others.

Not a single one of the errors alters by an iota the truth and the value of the story being told or the credibility and insightfulness of its narrator. Neither Porter's authority nor the conclusions to be drawn from his history are at all compromised by the poor fact-checking. One would wish this to be a perfect book, but it is not. Still, even with all of its small warts and those flyspecks of errata, *Blood and Guts* is nevertheless exactly what its author certainly intended it to be: an incisive and yet expansive history of medicine, and an opportunity to reflect critically upon the profession's faults and to agonize over its current problems.

It is in the sections sketching the development of biomedicine that Porter seems in a hurry to get to the bringing-up-to-date contents of his concluding pages, where he surveys the problems faced by Western medicine in the early twenty-first century, a time when its great success has led it increasingly into an era of unattainable expectations and unimaginable cost. Porter sets the tone of his final chapter, "Medicine in Modern Society," in a few sentences.

> Modern health care has turned into a colossal service industry, in both state and private sectors; in many nations it claims a greater share of the gross national product than any other item—these days a staggering 15 percent in the USA. Critics call it a juggernaught, an institution out of control, or at least one driven less by patient need than by profit and professional power. The personal touch, so essential to healing, has been lost.... This transition from small man to corporate enterprise is the result, in part, of those giant strides in basic and clinical research, and the pharmacological and surgical revolutions discussed in the preceding chapters.... The medical machine has acquired an extraordinary momentum.

Porter offers no solutions, and perhaps there are none. But readers can hardly be blamed if a mood of pessimism follows after reading his description of the various ways in which individual nations have attempted to cope with the problems of the access, the quality, and the cost of medical care. As he so correctly points out, tinkering with the increasing problems of the American and European health schemes has not resulted in changes that amount to true structural reform, but "merely a ragbag of cost-capping initiatives, accounting and managerial strategies and short-term economies."

And all this is happening at a time when more affluent consumers—that is what patients are nowadays called by insurance actuaries and the advocates of egalitarian healing practices—are demanding additional services in the form of "the fulfillment of life-style wishes, bodily enhancement and further extensions of life." The spiral of demands and expectations grows ever higher, matched in magnitude only by the spiral of dissatisfaction among patients and doctors alike. Perhaps a knowledge of history—of

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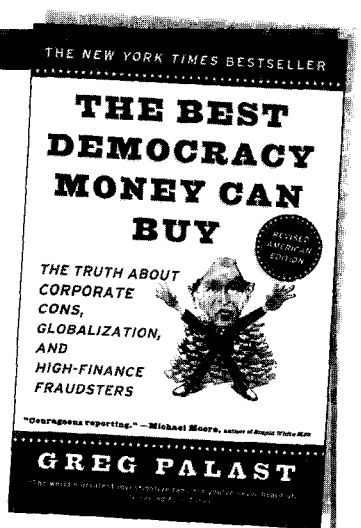

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the story of how we got to this place, with its daily biomedical miracles alongside its daily failures of humanity—may be of some help at a time when "the public climate is not one of optimism, but of new-millennial anxiety."

MEDICAL LITERATURE IS replete with essays whose titles are some variant of "Why We Should Study Our History," but I have never read one such work that is entirely satisfactory, nor am I completely certain of my own reasons for spending countless hours of a professional life delving into historical arcana, other than the prize that is always awarded to anyone with an avocation: the great fun of the thing. But in reading *Blood and Guts*, and then going back to *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind*, I realize that these two books together introduce a novel perspective on the uses of history, one that is as uniquely contemporary as it is essential. In the concluding chapter of each book, Porter gives voice to an apprehension that, overtly recognized or not, nowadays increasingly influences many of the policy decisions—by governments, or by small research or clinical teams, or even by individual physicians in the consulting room—that underlie the growth and provision of medical care. The apprehension is simply formulated: "Is *this* something a doctor should be doing?"

What, in fact, are the goals of medicine? The sweep of its history since the Hippocratic era has seen those goals evolve from the elementary principle of curing disease in individual patients to the gradual realization—coming to full form in the nineteenth century—that the relief of human suffering, whether of one person at a time or in the aggregate, is an equally worthy objective. Modern scientific medicine had its start when physicians began to retreat to the laboratory in order to solve specific problems that they encountered at the bedside; it grew, in the words of the historian Erwin Ackerknecht, "only through cultivation of the not immediately useful," until it became an entity and built an establishment unto itself.

But we have now reached a time when biomedical discovery determines the range of clinical problems that fall within the realm of a doctor to treat, instead of vice versa. A disease is now a condition for which science has provided a treatment; the tail wags the dog. As a consequence of this process, the definitions of sickness and of suffering have expanded to include all those conditions for which we have devised therapies. And so, under the influence of the profusion of miracles bursting forth from the burgeoning research establishment, we began some time in the late twentieth century to define sickness and suffering in terms of what the laboratory makes possible, rather than in terms of what is necessary.

As Porter put it in *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind*, the problem "is endemic to a system in which an expanding medical establishment, faced with a healthier population, is driven to medicalizing normal events ... and treating trivial complaints with fancy procedures." It is possible to shorten a nose whose proprietor is displeased by its length, but it is necessary to repair a cleft palate; it is possible to grow hair on a balding head, but it is necessary to treat heart failure; it is possible to fertilize an ovum in vitro, but it is necessary to provide postpartum care to the newborn infants of the poor. One of these decades it will probably be possible to genetically increase the height and intelligence of our progeny, but it will still be necessary to treat malaria and schistosomiasis, diseases that kill more than one million men and women every year, out of the sight of the increasers and the increases.

The panorama of historical evolution has led us to a present in which, as Porter puts it in *Blood and Guts*, "medicine may be on the brink of one of the greatest transformations in its long and chequered history." Enhancement and wish-fulfillment are increasingly possible, but they are decidedly not necessary. The history of medicine tells us how we got here, but it tells us something of far greater importance: namely, that medicine's long path has not been a smooth trajectory. The apparent arc of its progress has been knocked off course more than once, and sometimes for the better. There is no inevitability to the folly-fraught direction in which we now seem to be heading. There is no need to do a thing just because we can.

This is the time for a reckoning, based on the realistic goals of medicine as it was practiced before the laboratory's benisons turned the heads of physicians and the public about just what it is that the profession should be doing for its patients. The healer's tradition has always included the instruction of those who come for care: the root of "doctor" is *docere*, to teach. It is the profession's obligation to rediscover for itself—and then to instruct the public on—the limits within which the responsible physician should be pursuing his art. Perhaps by studying the lessons of the past, we may be guided back to medicine's most basic goal: the prevention and the treatment of real sickness and real suffering. ■

Why Johnnie Can't Lead

By JUSTIN DRIVER

A Lawyer's Life
by Johnnie Cochran with David Fisher

(St. Martin's Press, 311 pp., $25.95)

IN OCTOBER 1994, Charlie Rose moderated a forum at the 92nd Street Y in New York. Although the panel featured three speakers, spectators turned out largely to see William Kunstler and Alan Dershowitz renew an old argument concerning the proper role of lawyers. Kunstler supported the activist-lawyer approach to the law, which requires attorneys to agitate for social justice. Dershowitz supports a more process-oriented approach to the law, which requires vigorous representation even of clients who are suspected of wrongdoing. While the two conceptions of the lawyer are in opposition, both are fueled by idealism—which may explain why the client lists of both lawyers have included deeply repugnant individuals.

Until his death in 1995, Kunstler was the archetypal movement lawyer. He thought of himself as a "people's lawyer" and famously declared that he represented only people who had causes he could support. "I only defend those whose goals I share. I'm not a lawyer for hire," Kunstler intoned. "I only defend those I love. I feel alive when I have a cause." Here is his conception of the vocation of the activist lawyer: "He is activated, not by

JUSTIN DRIVER, former assistant literary editor at TNR, is a student at Harvard Law School.

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What are the facts?

Radical Islam is the common denominator. Four Al Qaeda conspirators were recently convicted of the deadly bombing of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. Suspects linked to Osama bin Laden bombed the USS Cole in 2001. That same year, the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Philippines kidnapped and beheaded Christian missionaries. A group called Jamaah Islamiah committed the Bali nightclub massacre in October, 2002, which killed more than 200 innocent victims. In late 2002, an Islamic Chechen guerrilla group seized a packed Moscow opera house, causing the deaths of more than 100 people.

But clearly, Israelis and Jews are primary targets of these terrorists. Last November, Muslims bombed an Israeli hotel in Kenya, killing 13. In Israel itself, the Islamic groups Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hizbollah have murdered more than 600 civilians and injured over 4,000 in the last two years—a devastation in that tiny country equal to having more than 35,000 U.S. citizens killed and 230,000 wounded.

> "Islamic terrorist groups share one common purpose: To rid the world of 'infidels' and to establish a worldwide Islamic order."

These worldwide terrorist acts have two glaring elements in common. First, all were committed by radical Islamists—groups that advocate overthrowing Western democratic governments and replacing them with fundamentalist Islamic regimes. Second, all these groups believe that killing innocent people in terrorist acts is a legitimate way to achieve their goals.

What does radical Islam really want? Despite the nationalistic focus of some of these terrorist groups, they all share dedication to a common purpose: carrying out a *jihad*, or holy war, to rid the world of "infidels," such as Christians, Jews and Hindus, and the establishment of a worldwide Islamic order.

For example, although the immediate goal of Hamas (the terrorist Islamic Resistance Movement of the Palestinians) is local—to eliminate all Jews from Israel and the disputed territories—Hamas claims affiliation with the international Muslim Brotherhood, whose purposes are "building the Muslim state" and "mastering the world with Islam" through *jihad*.

Likewise, while the Abu Sayyaf Group appears focused on ridding the Philippines of Christians—usually by beheading them—it has received funding from the Taliban in Afghanistan and other organizations affiliated with Osama bin Laden. It, too, is part of the international terrorist movement.

The same is true of Chechen rebels: While their demands focus on regional independence, their philosophy is radical Islam, and they have shadowy connections to Al Qaeda.

Of course Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden makes no secret of his murderous global design: To create worldwide Islamic rule by killing or subjugating non-Muslims, especially Jews and Christians.

Why does radical Islam use terrorism? To most of the world, the idea of purposefully killing innocent people—even for a noble cause—is unthinkable. Likewise, the notion of suicide bombers: Most of the world's religions consider human life to be God's most precious gift, not to be sacrificed, except to save others.

The *jihadis* believe otherwise. They justify heartless, cold-blooded killing of innocent women and children on behalf of Allah. They entice youngsters to commit suicide, to become "martyrs," with the promise of sensual pleasures in the hereafter.

What can be done? When our leaders tell us we are threatened by terrorism, they only tell half the story. Terrorism is clearly dangerous to our people and anathema to our social, religious and democratic values. Yet terrorism is *not* a goal in itself—it is a vicious tactic of warfare, used to achieve totalitarian ends.

Indeed, if we declare our enemy to be terrorism, *we fail to see our real enemy*. The enemy is militant Islam, which uses terrorism to destroy democratic institutions and deny our basic freedoms. It is a tool being used ruthlessly to supplant our civilization with religious fundamentalism—to impose upon us a world order based on orthodox Islam, with its harsh rules of behavior, intolerance of diversity, subjugation of women and totalitarian political rule.

It's time we speak out: Radical Islam—*not* just the tactic of terrorism—threatens our country, the state of Israel and other democratic nations. It's also time for moderate Muslims and their imams to raise their voices . . . and unequivocally condemn the violent aims of their brethren. The world waits for you to dissociate your faith from these bloody tactics and their authoritarian purposes. Finally, it's time to fight back: We cannot pretend that we don't know who is responsible for today's deadly terrorist attacks, and we cannot suffer them passively. Just as the U.S. is responding aggressively to the threat of terrorism, so must Israel respond, since its people are being killed and maimed by terror attacks on a daily basis. Above all and for everyone's good, militant Islam must be fought and defeated through a united effort by all civilized nations.

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the promise of fame and fortune, but by the sharing of a common cause with those he represents. I no longer know where the movement ends and the law begins. In fact, for me now there is no significant dividing line." Kunstler jettisoned his requirement to love clients when he started defending mob bosses in the 1980s, but he never lost his faith in the Movement.

Dershowitz, by contrast, believes that defense attorneys should cherish the process. In his many books, he consistently betrays no delusions about the innocence (or lack thereof) of the overwhelming majority of criminal defendants: "Any criminal lawyer who tells you that most of his clients are not guilty is either bluffing or deliberately limiting his practice to a few innocent defendants." Whether an individual is actually innocent of the alleged crime plays no role in Dershowitz's selection of clients, some of whom have included Michael Milken, Leona Helmsley, Mike Tyson, and Claus von Bülow. In fact, Dershowitz once proclaimed that "almost all of my own clients have been guilty." Still, the adversarial system of American justice requires his exertions: "Once I decide to take a case, I have only one agenda: I want to win. I will try, by every fair and legal means, to get my client off—without regard to the consequences." While Kunstler felt alive when he served a cause, Dershowitz needs only a case to feel enlivened. Drawing on Holmes's conception of the attorney articulated in "The Path of the Law," Dershowitz argues that his job as a lawyer is to predict how courts will rule: "I am not a cheerleader. In this respect, my job is like that of a radiologist. I must read the X-ray accurately, without giving the patient false hope."

Not surprisingly, Dershowitz and Kunstler regarded each other with utter contempt. In the late 1970s, Dershowitz called Kunstler a "race-baiter," and later "the David Duke of the legal profession." Kunstler charged that Dershowitz relied excessively on his students, made a poor civil libertarian, and allowed money to motivate his actions: "as long as the color was green you could get Dershowitz on board." The two traded strikingly similar charges of intellectual obstinacy. Dershowitz said of his nemesis that "he can contort everything and present the argument that he is right and everyone else is wrong." Kunstler charged that Dershowitz is "extremely vindictive to anyone who doesn't share his beliefs on everything." Despite all their differences, the two men had one thing in common: neither has ever been frightened of publicity.

The tension between Dershowitz and Kunstler seemed to have cooled considerably by the time they appeared together at the Y. The two even engaged in some amusing banter. (When Dershowitz called Lorena Bobbitt a "feminist Dirty Harry" and argued that "we should not encourage taking the law into your own hands," Kunstler retorted, "That isn't what she took into her own hands.") Still, their conceptions of lawyering could not remain submerged for long. Dershowitz struck first by castigating Kunstler's "black rage" theory to explain why a Jamaican man had killed six people on the Long Island Railroad. "What Bill Kunstler describes as a defense I think most of us would call simple racism," Dershowitz remarked. When asked if he inquires whether clients are innocent, Dershowitz happily extolled the process-oriented approach to law. "I have three rules," Dershowitz said. "I never believe what the prosecutor or the police say, I never believe what the media say, and I never believe what my client says." Kunstler, meanwhile, took joy in playing the activist lawyer to the end and challenged Dershowitz for representing O. J. Simpson. "I don't take spousal murder cases," Kunstler sniped.

JOHNNIE L. COCHRAN JR. did not attend the debate that night, but I have no doubt that he would have declared that both men were right. Cochran derives himself from conceptions of the lawyer embodied by both Dershowitz and Kunstler, leading to an awkward notion of the lawyer's vocation in which contradictory ideals are willfully joined and then corrupted for the sake of convenience. At moments in Cochran's new book, his second lackluster memoir in the last seven years, he sounds remarkably like the process-oriented lawyer praised by Dershowitz. "If one man cannot get a fair trial," he writes, "no matter how hideous his crime or evil the man, none of us can be certain of getting a fair trial." Similarly, in *Journey to Justice* he wrote: "Once engaged, defense attorneys must give themselves without reservation to protecting the constitutional rights of each and every one of their clients. For it is the zealous defense of the individual—however unpopular, however revolting the alleged crime—that guarantees the right of the peace-loving, law-abiding majority to live secure in its freedom."

But Cochran also appropriates Kunstler's romantic (and equally self-promotional) model of the activist lawyer. He has remarked upon the strong identification that he experiences with a client: "I looked down and saw that my hands were shaking, not with apprehension but with the power of revelation.... Being a lawyer means not only sharing the pain of other people's suffering but also accepting the burden of their trust. In the final moment, being a lawyer isn't about winning or losing. It's about keeping faith." Cochran also cites the *Brown* v. *Board of Education* decision as the pivotal factor in the development of his desire to become an attorney—the epiphany of his activist-lawyer narrative: "The Supreme Court of the United States had ruled and the citizens accepted it. It made me appreciate the power of the law to change society, to change people's lives. And I wanted to be a part of it. I wanted to be a lawyer." Cochran even goes so far as to affect some of the love for his clients that Kunstler professed. When writing about his lengthy work to free a Black Panther, Cochran gushes that "I owe Geronimo Pratt not only a debt of justice but one of love." Although he never describes himself as loving O. J. Simpson, it is clear that he strongly identifies with Simpson in the classic manner of a movement lawyer. "It is striking to me how desperately some people really want to punish him for not being convicted of murder in his criminal trial," Cochran writes. "They just can't let him be."

COCHRAN DOES NOT aimlessly shift back and forth between the models of lawyering articulated by Dershowitz and Kunstler. He is a carefully calculated man. He appeals to the Kunstler model in order to lay claim to being an African American leader. But he is often involved with clients who cannot be grafted onto a cause, no matter how broadly defined. This is where his half-hearted embrace of the Dershowitz model comes in. Whereas Dershowitz honestly evaluates dubious claims of innocence, Cochran is hampered by the knowledge that leaders are not supposed to associate with scoundrels. As a result, he feels compelled to play agnostic about all of his clients' innocence, Simpson included: "I wasn't at the scene on June 12, 1994. Only the victims and the killer or killers were there. The rest of us can only speculate—and that includes me."

More troubling than his agnosticism, however, is Cochran's reliance on political activism when he should invoke legal process. When he addressed the legislative conference of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) in 1995, he called the Simpson case a civil rights battle in the tradition of *Dred Scott* v. *Sandford*, *Plessy* v. *Ferguson*, and *Brown* v. *Board of Education*. One could chalk up Cochran's racial approach to defending Simpson as the fulfillment of Dershowitz's ideal: doing

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whatever is permissible in order to get his client acquitted. When Cochran spoke to the CBC, however, he was not speaking to jurors. He was stepping beyond his duty as an advocate for Simpson and into his preferred role as an advocate for African Americans. And the message remained the same.

As *A LAWYER'S LIFE* demonstrates, Cochran's comments to the CBC cannot be attributed to a temporary lapse induced by the stresses of high-profile trial lawyering. Seven years of hindsight have only calcified Cochran's view that the Simpson case represents an important moment in the struggle for African American equality. "The allegations in this case were oddly reminiscent of those made against Emmett Till, a black teenager lynched by a mob for allegedly whistling at a white woman," he writes. "Half a century later a black man was accused of killing his beautiful blonde ex-wife and it became the dominant media event in the entire world." Even in the hyperbolic world of today's civil rights rhetoric, Cochran's analogy stands out for its cruelty and its mendacity. When two white men shot Till in Money, Mississippi in 1955 and then—with an uncanny sense of metaphor—used a cotton gin's fan to weigh the body down in the Tallahatchie River, it constituted an awful crime that had been played out repeatedly before. Till's lynching exemplified a shocking absence of justice. When California tried O. J. Simpson for the murders of Ronald Goldman and Nicole Brown Simpson, the proceedings exemplified the presence of justice.

And yet, at least in one respect, it must be conceded that Cochran is correct in observing that Simpson's trial brings to mind the trial of Till's killers. In his closing argument to the all-white jury in Mississippi, the defense attorney Sidney Carlton argued that if the jurors found the men guilty, "your ancestors will turn over in their graves, and I'm sure every last Anglo-Saxon one of you has the courage to free these men." Most people understood this closing as a race-based plea for jury nullification, whereby jurors acquit defendants whom they believe are guilty. Now cut to the courtroom in Los Angeles. It is difficult to see how Cochran's closing argument in the Simpson case did not also amount to a race-based plea for jury nullification. "Maybe this is why you were selected," Cochran proclaimed, implicitly referring to the racial identity of the nine African American jurors. "There's something in your background, in your character, that helps you understand that this is wrong. Maybe you are the right people, at the right time, at the right place, to say, 'No more, we are not going to have this. This is wrong.'" Cochran invited the jury to "send the message" with its verdict, and repeated Carlton's certainty about the verdict's outcome: "You are empowered to say, 'We are not going to take that anymore.' I'm sure you will do the right thing about that." Jury nullification may certainly be an appropriate remedy when jurors are faced with enforcing unjust laws, but not even Cochran has the temerity to contend that the prohibition on first-degree murder constitutes such a law. Jury nullification on the basis of race is no more palatable in California in the 1990s than in Mississippi in the 1950s.

COCHRAN'S INCONSISTENCIES regarding his role as an attorney would not be nearly so unsettling if his confusion between activism and process were correctly recognized and viewed with skepticism. But many African Americans do not see that Johnnie L. Cochran Jr.'s most important client will always be Johnnie L. Cochran Jr. Instead they regard the demagogic, camera-chasing lawyer as a leader of the post-civil rights era. Predictably, the lionization of Cochran began as the Simpson trial unfolded, with one South Central reverend instructing that that Cochran was "a pioneer in the new phase of the struggle for liberation. The 1960s crowd opened the door. The 1990s crowd has to make certain people are walking through it. He bridges the two generations. He's old enough to have the wisdom, young enough to have the energy." The *L.A. Watts Times* found biblical importance in Cochran's work, proclaiming him "a leader whose task has been likened to Moses demanding that Pharaoh let God's people go."

And the end of the Simpson trial did not bring an end to Cochran's influence. One week after the jury acquitted Simpson, Cochran appeared on *Meet the Press* to comment broadly upon African American issues. He has yet to cede the spotlight. Tom Bradley, Los Angeles's former mayor, spoke for many when he said of his old fraternity brother: "He is a national hero, especially among African Americans." Cochran finished second in a poll, taken at the Million Man March, that listed the most influential black men in America. He remains an extraordinarily popular speaker on college campuses and frequently receives awards from prominent African American orga-

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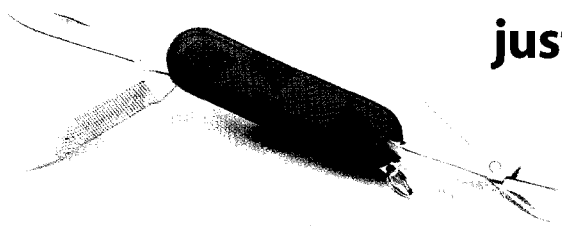

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nizations. No longer content to battle in the courtroom, he increasingly takes his cause to the streets, often with the assistance of Al Sharpton. Cochran has also been embraced by the civil rights establishment, and he leads protests with Wyatt Tee Walker, who served as a key adviser to Martin Luther King Jr. Cochran owes a lot to CNN: he writes of being approached by autograph seekers in Soweto and being featured in a South African advertising campaign that dubbed Pepsi "the drink of liberation."

As Cochran's stature among African Americans has grown, so has his law practice. The Cochran Firm, as the group is formally known, consists of more than one hundred twenty lawyers and keeps offices in eight states. A partner in the Florida branch of The Cochran Firm says of the firm's eponym: "He is America's lawyer." Similarly, an attorney from the firm's Tennessee branch spoke of the positive impact that Cochran's presence has on the downtrodden: "We have seen a large segment of the population that feels somewhat powerless in the courtroom and in official circles. They want and need a hero like Mr. Cochran." The Cochran Firm erected billboards in Memphis that promised a "new level of justice." A new level of justice, of course, does not necessarily denote a more just level.

DESPITE HIS POSTURING as a leader, Cochran, like many Los Angeles lawyers, is motivated primarily by a fascination with celebrity, including his own. In his book, he goes to great evidentiary pains to prove that he held sway long before the Simpson affair. In his first chapter, he modestly recalls that "prior to the Simpson trial I was among the best-known and respected attorneys in Southern California." And again: "My career did not begin—nor did it end—with the trial of O. J. Simpson." And once more: "Among the celebrities I'd represented—this was long before the O. J. Simpson case—were Michael Jackson and football Hall of Famer Jim Brown." No brush with fame appears too meager for Cochran: there is an excruciatingly detailed account of Cochran's work representing Todd Bridges, who played Gary Coleman's brother on *Diff'rent Strokes*.

Throughout his two books, Cochran wishes to demonstrate that his influence extends into all spheres of American life. This compulsion leads to a fever of name-dropping, even by the standards of such memoirs. The government: "The attorney general [Janet Reno] took my call." The recording industry: "I had represented and gotten to know several prominent hip-hop stars, including Tupac Shakur, Shuge [sic] Knight, and even Snoop, on other cases." The government and the recording industry together: "I flew back to Washington, D.C., where my friend Ron Brown, the secretary of commerce, had invited us to attend a White House summer concert at which Aretha Franklin and Lou Rawls—two of my clients—were the featured performers." Hollywood: "When Denzel Washington was researching his role as an attorney for the movie *Philadelphia* he spent time with ... me." Neverland: "'Look, Johnnie,' Michael said in his soft voice, 'I want you to do what you have to do. But I want you to be there for me. If you can do that, then okay. Tell O. J. I love him. Tell him it's all right.'"

Cochran's obsession with celebrity prevents him from accurately assessing who can be plausibly enlisted in a cause. Consider his relationship with Puff/P. Daddy/Diddy. "The one thing I definitely was not looking to do was get involved in another high-profile criminal case," Cochran writes. "Then Sean 'Puffy' Combs called and asked for my help." (He is not some sort of ambulance-chasing lawyer. The ambulances chase him.) Cochran's rationale for defending Combs demonstrates that he is incapable of distinguishing prominence from talent: "This kid has so much to offer. He's just beginning to touch his greatness. If I don't step up and get in there and fight, he is going to prison." Greatness? Combs is a third-rate rapper, actor, haberdasher, and restaurateur who glorifies ghetto life in large measure because he was raised in the suburbs.

More troubling than Cochran's cockeyed assessment of P. Diddy's talent, though, is his account of the events at Club New York that led to his client's arrest. According to Cochran, a man "threw a wad of cash at Combs. The message was obvious: It was a way of telling him that he wasn't so big, wasn't so important, that other people had a lot of money, too. You ain't all that. In the hip-hop world that is a challenge, a sign of disrespect. Guns appeared, between three and six shots were fired, three people were hit." In just a few simple sentences, Cochran manages to condone the misplaced bravado that distorts many African American males, and to excuse reckless gunplay, and then to slip into the passive voice. His glamorous client didn't do it, Cochran's reasoning goes, but if he had done it, he would have had a good reason.

After Latrell Sprewell received a one-year suspension for violently choking his coach twice in the span of an hour, Cochran asserts that yet another ambulance chased him: "Arn Tellem called and asked me to serve as an advisor to Golden State Warriors basketball star Latrell Sprewell." Cochran's justification for getting involved with Sprewell is bewildering for a person who fashions himself a social and political leader. "The Sprewell case seemed like a good fit for me," Cochran writes. "It wasn't going to be a prolonged case which would have taken a lot of time. It involved pro basketball, which was a passion of mine." Cochran claimed that the league's suspension of Sprewell was "arbitrary and capricious," and violated "fundamental fairness," and demonstrated "a rush to judgment." Never mind that the NBA interviewed twenty-three witnesses before rushing to its judgment. Incredibly, Cochran managed to portray Sprewell—a man who admittedly assaulted his coach—as the victim in the dispute: "This guy may make a lot of money, but he's definitely the underdog in this one."

Sean Combs and Latrell Sprewell are not the only famous names to have recently received counsel from Cochran. Calling themselves "The Al and Johnnie Show," Sharpton and Cochran announced an initiative this summer designed to help musicians gain a larger percentage of the profits they bring to recording labels. Sharpton and Cochran somewhat marred their cause (and exposed their motives) by selecting Michael Jackson—of all people—as the exemplary victim of the entertainment industry, the martyr to use against the corporate executives. "Sony's Tommy Mottola, the president of the record division, he is mean, he's racist, and he is very, very, very devilish," Jackson said at a subsequent rally. But he did not stop there. "So, I need your support, not just for me," Jackson continued. "When you fight for me, you fight for all black people—dead and alive." Jackson has been prone to conspiracy theory for many years now, but Cochran receives the credit for helping him to descend into the race-based variety.

COCHRAN, IN SUM, has never met an opportunity for publicity that he did not like. He has appeared on innumerable television shows—including *Roseanne* and *The Hughleys*—where he happily reprises his role as the poet lawyerate, spouting such couplets as "Why put the pedal to the metal/when it's friendlier to settle!" and "A dog is no longer a friend to man/once he bites you in the can." When Cochran's fascination with celebrity and his commitment to activism come into conflict, it is celebrity that generally carries the day. One issue that Cochran unfailingly mentions in his

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speeches and his books is his work on behalf of Geronimo Pratt, the Black Panther activist who was convicted of murdering a schoolteacher in the early 1970s. Cochran represented Pratt in the courtroom and claims to have worked tirelessly to free him from prison. To hear Cochran tell it, Pratt's case served as motivation for him to continue practicing law. "I will not retire until Geronimo Pratt is free," Cochran has written. Yet when California held a hearing to overturn Pratt's murder conviction, Cochran missed most of it because he was busily preparing for the debut of his show on Court TV.

Cochran is well into his sixteenth minute of fame; but his story is a fine illustration of the nature of glory in contemporary America. Once upon a time, the adjectives "famous" and "infamous" had antithetical meanings. You wanted the former but not the latter, even when the latter brought you the former. But increasingly the terms have become synonymous. This shift represents more than mere colloquial imprecision. Behavior that once would have drawn shame now brings glory. As long as people are looking at you and talking about you, the substance of what they are seeing and saying is of marginal importance. Infamy is such a pre-psychological notion, anyway.

CURIOUSLY, WHILE COCHRAN takes great pride in portraying himself as the ultimate insider, he also plays the role of the underdog when it is expedient. Toward the end of his memoir, Cochran relates how he and the prominent African American attorney Willie Gary successfully sued Disney's Wide World of Sports for copyright infringement. Though Cochran was understandably exultant about winning a $240 million verdict, he weirdly views it as a victory for the little man against the establishment. "We had beaten Disney in Orlando," Cochran writes, "We'd proved that it was possible for David to beat Goliath." Just four pages before making this outrageous claim, however, Cochran marveled at Gary's two-hundred-person law firm, his fifty-room house near Palm Beach, and his two Lear jets. This is not exactly what Fannie Lou Hamer had in mind. But if you believe, as Cochran does, that merely being black makes you an underdog, then it is possible to be an underdog in a Lear jet.

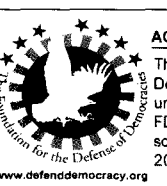
Cochran's sense of victimization and his sense of pride can battle for primacy in the space of a single sentence: "It was easy for critics—and few people have been criticized more for doing a good job than I was after the Simpson verdict—to point to my expensive cars and my nice houses on both coasts and my very nice custom-made suits and, my oh my, all those colorful ties, and declare that I'm just another one of those slick money-grubbing lawyers taking advantage of people who have been hurt to squeeze millions of dollars out of insurance companies." Leaving aside his arresting fashion sense, it is difficult to work up much sympathy for Cochran, because his sarcastic self-assessment is remarkably accurate.

Cochran's enormous self-regard makes his justification for pursuing black reparations equally baffling. In his book, Cochran argues that reparations are crucial to restoring the dignity of African Americans: "It would be the beginning of giving back to us the pride that was robbed by the institution of slavery." Whatever may be the merits of the reparations idea, the restoration of pride is certainly not among them. The very existence of a proud figure like Cochran refutes his simplistic assessment. Cochran insults millions of justifiably proud and accomplished African Americans by contending that stroking a check can somehow instill a quality that they already possess. Cochran should know that no one can give you pride; you must acquire it on your own.

FEW ISSUES MORE clearly expose Cochran's shortcomings than his views on racial profiling in the wake of September 11. His poor performance in this context is all the more disappointing because he was in the vanguard of identifying racial profiling as a widespread problem. He dedicated a large portion of his early career in private practice to confronting racial bias in the Los Angeles Police Department, where there was plenty of racial bias to be confronted; and recently he helped to reveal how New Jersey Turnpike troopers obfuscated their systematic harassment of black drivers. Yet when polls came out after the terrorist attacks showing that African Americans—despite an intimate understanding of the perils of racial profiling—supported the profiling of people of Middle Eastern descent, Cochran missed an opportunity to demonstrate real leadership. Rather than yielding to the baser instincts of a racialist populism, Cochran could have drawn an analogy between the two situations and pointed out that stereotyping often leads to ineffective law enforcement.

But Cochran's steadfast opposition to racial profiling when it is committed against black people does not extend to brown people. In *A Lawyer's Life*, he observes that "I travel by airplane a lot and, admittedly, after the attack I found myself looking carefully at my fellow passengers before getting on an airplane; I found myself racial profiling. Me. It came as a big surprise to me." But Cochran refuses to check his bigoted impulse: "The difference, I decided, was the difference in the actual threat. People driving on a highway or walking down a street are not imposing an immediate threat to anyone. There is no immediate danger that would be alleviated by a race-based policy of stop and search. But as we've all learned that same thing isn't true about passengers getting on airplanes. One person can destroy that plane and with it hundreds of lives. That's an immediate danger." Cochran fails to understand that the same reason that makes racial profiling so noxious when applied to African Americans—attributing the behavior of individuals to an entire group—also applies to people of Middle Eastern descent. Racial profiling is a legitimate tactic so long as it is not inflicted on his own people.

Though he fancies himself a leader in the mold of Thurgood Marshall, Cochran falls far short of his hero's mark. Where Marshall ended American apartheid, Cochran uses his power to draw attention to the dearth of black head coaches in the National Football League. Cochran may have been born too late to litigate the school desegregation cases, but African Americans have more pressing concerns than unshackling handsomely paid defensive coordinators. The grievances of entertainers and athletes are not exactly primary grievances. Whether Tommy Mottola has been fair to Michael Jackson or not, there remains the vexing matter of lagging educational achievement across all socioeconomic levels, and the vexing matter of staggering incarceration rates among African American males, and all the other vexing matters regarding the life prospects of blacks in American society. The intellectual incoherence, the star worship, and the doggerel of Johnnie L. Cochran Jr. will do nothing to remedy those torments. ■



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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Aspidistra

WHOM TO BE LIKE? IT is a way of asking what to be; and for intellectuals and journalists (they are not always the same) there are many greater mistakes than the aspiration to be like George Orwell. For a long time, indeed, the admiration of Orwell has been one of the most encouraging features of our political and cultural situation. This aspidistra deserves to be kept flying. Liberals and conservatives tussle over his true teachings, and over the identity of his true sons; and there is something a little comic about all these feuding heirs, and also a little belittling in the way the battle for Orwell has turned into still another franchise, still another exercise in branding, in this stupefyingly mercantile time. Yet finally Orwell is worth tussling over: He had a narcotic relationship to principles. There are worse masters, much worse. Or so all thoughtful people believed until a few weeks ago, when *The New Yorker* announced that Orwell was "wrong."

"IN WHAT SENSE," LOUIS MENAND demanded, "can writings that have been taken to mean so many incompatible things be called 'clear'? And what, exactly, was Orwell right about?" About Stalinism, one starts to say—but Menand is not impressed. "Orwell was against imperialism, fascism, and Stalinism. Excellent. Many people were against them in Orwell's time, and a great many more people have been against them since." The condescension in that remark is disgusting. As it happens, a great many people were not at all against Stalinism in the years in which Orwell wrote, and if many more people have been against Stalinism since, it is in part owing to the genuinely valiant refusal of Orwell and others to desist from their denunciations of it. Yet the intellectual struggles of the 1930s and the 1940s matter less to Menand than the fact that the CIA—"Howard Hunt was the agent on the case": how repercussive!—secretly bought the film rights to *Animal Farm*. Menand disapproves of intellectual struggle. It is so overwrought, so over. "We don't live just by ideas," he observes in his sedative way, as if anybody believes that we do live just by ideas. Of course, it is precisely because we don't live just by ideas that we must live also by ideas; but I am getting heavy.

MENAND SNEAKILY MAKES ORWELL over in his own diffident, perspectivist, mildly anti-intellectual image, so as to relieve us of Orwell's obligations. "He is not saying, This is the way it objectively was from any possible point of view. He is saying, This is the way it looked to someone with my beliefs." This is madly incorrect. Here is Orwell in 1942, in "Looking Back on the Spanish War," reflecting on the lies of wartime:

> This kind of thing is frightening to me, because it often gives me the feeling that the very concept of objective truth is fading out of the world. ... I am willing to believe that history is for the most part inaccurate and biased, but what is peculiar to our age is the abandonment of the idea that history *could* be truthfully written. In the past people deliberately lied, or they unconsciously colored what they wrote, or they struggled after the truth, well knowing that they must make many mistakes; but in each case they believed that 'the facts' existed and were more or less discoverable.

Orwell plainly regards the eclipse of objective truth as a decline and a danger. This passage, and there are more like it, is not an expression of perspectivism, it is a repudiation of perspectivism.

FOR *THE NEW YORKER*'S AUTHORITY on Orwell, the danger lies not in the fading of the concept of objective truth, but in the clinging to the concept of objective truth. Menand thinks that truth is merely a warrant for terrorism, that objectivity is just an early form of fanaticism, that certainty only kills. "Moral certainty of any kind can lead to bloodshed," he asserts in *Raritan*, in a piece that is critical of the abolitionists of the nineteenth century. "Of any kind": All certainty is like all other certainty, its content is insignificant, all that matters are its consequences. Menand has risen above substance. He is indifferent, and afraid. His fear is understandable: When one has renounced the inquiry into truth and falsity, certainty must seem terrifying. Every conviction must look like an absolute. And so he notes that "in defining the United States as a civilization in opposition to militant Islam, even President Bush found himself, in his speech before Congress right after the attacks, explaining that moral certainty is precisely what makes the enemy so dangerous." Do you follow? A war against jihad is itself a jihad. There is no distinction between a just war and a holy war. What a haul of irony! In this way "the modernist paradox is complete: Americans now find themselves in the position of fighting, and being willing to die, for the belief that no one should be made to die for a belief." Menand is fond of that miserably apathetic sentence: He published it also in *The New Yorker* last fall, in a review of books about the catastrophe of September 11, adding there that "Americans hold it to be a transcendent truth that it is possible to live a good life without loyalty to a transcendent cause." Philosophy is finished. Go shopping.

WHO ARE THESE AMERICANS WHOSE spiritual condition Menand intuits so clearly? Myself, I have less anecdotal evidence for the population's perfect postmodernity. I have met Americans who are willing to fight and to die for a belief, and Americans who are not willing; and Americans who would like to discuss the particular belief a little more. And if we are indeed a nation of suave anti-foundationalists, too enlightened or too embarrassed about transcendent causes, then I see no reason to worry about, say, John Ashcroft and the political Christianity that he faithfully and inappropriately serves. Ashcroft is a nasty creature of certainty, no question about it; but his opponents are no less certain that his certainty is false. And so they should be, in my view. In Menand's view, however, the argument can never be closed. He derides Orwell's linguistic contributions to modern liberalism—"Big Brother," "doublethink," "thought police"—as "belong[ing] to the same category as 'liar' and 'pervert' and 'madman.' They are conversation-stoppers." But why should some conversations not be stopped, not concluded with the demonstration that a man who was called a liar actually lied? Or is stopping the conversation in this way like stopping the conversation in the totalitarian way? John Brown in Pottawatomie and Mohammed Atta in Manhattan acted in a similar spirit, but it is significant that the former dreamed of freeing enslaved people and the latter dreamed of enslaving free people. The notion that the hatred of slavery was an excess of hatred, and perhaps that the Civil War was not quite a war worth fighting, is bizarre. With their metaphysics, Menand writes, the world of the abolitionists and the world of the slave-owners "seem to have more in common with each other than either does with our own." There speaks the pragmatist: fascinating at a dinner, useless in a struggle. Unlike Menand's Orwell, the pragmatist is not "a misfit." He is a fit.

LEON WIESELTIER

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A Better Way to Protect Endangered Species

Laura E. Huggins is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.

The fate of many endangered species is in the hands of private property owners. By maintaining habitat for rare species, landholders are providing a public service, and the best way to encourage landholders to protect these species is to ensure that they are compensated rather than penalized for this service.

The Endangered Species Act (ESA), passed by Congress and signed by President Nixon in 1973, established lists of endangered and threatened species and prohibited the killing or harming of them and their habitat.

Measured by any reasonable standard, the ESA has failed. In the past three decades many more species have been added to the list than have been removed. Even if we count all of the species removed from the list as "successes," they account for only 3.5 percent of the species recorded since 1973. According to the General Accounting Office, most species are closer to extinction now than when they were originally listed.

The first step toward reforming the ESA should be to moderate the damage that the current act inflicts on private landowners. Nearly 80 percent of listed species depend on private land for all or part of their habitat requirements. Yet if landholders provide suitable habitat for an endangered species, they run the risk of their property being subject to severe government regulations, many of which constrain land from being used profitably. An unintended consequence of the ESA is that it effectively creates perverse incentives for landowners to destroy species and their habitat—the "shoot, shovel, and shut up" syndrome.

Some environmental leaders recognize the problem. Michael Bean, an Environmental Defense Fund attorney who is often credited with authorship of the ESA, acknowledged that there is "increasing evidence that at least some private landowners are actively managing their land so as to avoid potential endangered species problems." He emphasized that these actions are "not the result of malice toward the environment" but "fairly rational decisions, motivated by a desire to avoid potentially significant economic constraints."

Cases of preemptive habitat destruction have become notorious. For instance, as the golden-cheeked warbler was about to be added to the endangered species list, a firm that owned hundreds of acres of warbler habitat hired workers to chainsaw the entire stand of oak and juniper trees, thus preserving its investment by eliminating the birds' habitat.

For wildlife conservation to be successful, negative restrictions on landowners must be replaced with positive incentives, such as those in Texas's Landowner Incentive Program. Under the tenets of this state-initiated program, landholders voluntarily enter into a contract to perform measurable actions (such as restoring native vegetation or performing controlled burns) with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Biologists are allowed on the property to monitor progress, and landowners are paid on the basis of meeting the contract's objectives. Grants of up to $10,000 are available to property owners who actively manage their land for rare species.

As Aldo Leopold explained nearly seventy years ago, "conservation will ultimately boil down to rewarding the private landowner who conserves the public interest." For more on the importance of protecting private property rights, see *Property Rights: A Practical Guide to Freedom and Prosperity* (Hoover Press 2003).

— *Laura E. Huggins*

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

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